

LONDON VAGRANTS.

THE evils consequent upon the uncertainty of labour I have already been at considerable pains to point out. There is still one other mischief attendant upon it that remains to be exposed, and which, if possible, is greater than any other yet adduced. Many classes of labour are necessarily uncertain or fitful in their character. Some work can be pursued only at certain seasons; some depends upon the winds, as, for instance, dock labour; some on fashion; and nearly all on the general prosperity of the country. Now, the labourer who is deprived of his usual employment by any of the above causes, must, unless he has laid by a portion of his earnings while engaged, become a burden to his parish, or the state, or else he must seek work, either of another kind or in another place. The mere fact of a man's seeking work in different parts of the country, may be taken as evidence that he is indisposed to live on the charity or labour of others; and this feeling should be encouraged in every rational manner. Hence the greatest facility should be afforded to all labourers who may be unable to obtain work in one locality, to pass to another part of the country where there may be a demand for their labour. In fine, it is expedient that every means should be given for extending the labour-market for the working classes; that is to say, for allowing them as wide a field for the exercise of their calling as possible. To do this involves the establishment of what are called the "casual wards" of the different unions throughout the country. These are, strictly speaking, the free hostleries of the unemployed workpeople, where they may be lodged and fed, on their way to find work in some more active district. But the establishment of these gratuitous hotels has called into existence a large class of wayfarers, for whom they were never contemplated. They have been the means of affording great encouragement to those vagabond or erratic spirits who find continuity of application to any task specially irksome to them, and who are physically unable or mentally unwilling to remain for any length of time in the same place, or at the same work—creatures who are vagrants in disposition and principle; the wandering tribe of this country; the nomads of the present day.

"The right which every person apparently destitute possesses, to demand food and shelter, affords," says Mr. Pigott, in the Report on Vagrancy, "great facilities and encouragement to idle and dissolute persons to avoid labour, and pass their lives in idleness and pillage.

There can be no doubt that of the wayfarers who, in summer especially, demand admission into workhouses, the number of those whom the law contemplates under the titles of 'idle and disorderly,' and 'rogues and vagabonds,' greatly exceeds that of those who are honestly and *bonâ fide* travelling in search of employment, and that it is the former class whose numbers have recently so increased as to require a remedy."

It becomes almost a necessary result of any system which seeks to give shelter and food to the industrious operative in his way to look for work, that it should be the means of harbouring and fostering the idle and the vagabond.

To refuse an asylum to the vagrant is to shut out the traveller; so hard is it to tell the one from the other.

The prime cause of vagabondism is essentially the non-inculcation of a habit of industry; that is to say, the faculty of continuous application at a particular form of work, has not been engendered in the individual's mind, and he has naturally an aversion to any regular occupation, and becomes erratic, wandering from this thing to that, without any settled or determined object. Hence we find, that the vagrant disposition begins to exhibit itself precisely at that age when the first attempts are made to inculcate the habit of continuous labour among youths. This will be seen by the table in the opposite page (taken from the Returns of the Houseless Poor), which shows the greatest number of inmates to be between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five.

The cause of the greater amount of vagrancy being found among individuals between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five (and it is not by the table alone that this fact is borne out), appears to be the irksomeness of any kind of sustained labour when first performed. This is especially the case with youth; and hence a certain kind of compulsion is necessary, in order that the habit of doing the particular work may be engendered. Unfortunately, however, at this age the self-will of the individual begins also to be developed, and any compulsion or restraint becomes doubly irksome. Hence, without judicious treatment, the restraint may be entirely thrown off by the youth, and the labour be discarded by him, before any steadiness of application has been produced by constancy of practice. The cause of vagrancy then resolves itself, to a great extent, into the harshness of either parents or employers; and this it will be found is

generally the account given by the vagrants themselves. They have been treated with severity, and being generally remarkable for their self-will, have run away from their home or master to live while yet mere lads in some of the low lodging-houses. Here they find companions of the same age and character as themselves, with whom they ultimately set out on a vagabond excursion through the country, begging or plundering on their way.

Another class of vagrants consists of those who, having been thrown out of employment, have travelled through the country, seeking work without avail, and who, consequently, have lived on charity so long, that the habits of wandering and mendicancy have eradicated their former habits of industry, and the industrious workman has become changed into the habitual beggar.

THE AGES OF APPLICANTS FOR SHELTER AT THE CENTRAL ASYLUM, PLAYHOUSE-YARD, WHITECROSS-STREET, IN THE YEAR 1849.

Age. Months.	No. of Applicants.	Age. Years.	No. of Applicants.	Age. Years.	No. of Applicants.
Children under 1	17	17	380	49	84
Children of 1	4	18	336	50	108
" 2	42	19	385	51	28
" 3	21	20	296	52	40
" 4	14	21	335	53	44
" 5	14	22	386	54	21
" 6	26	23	295	55	49
" 7	30	24	399	56	35
" 8	7	25	122	57	27
" 9	14	26	238	58	35
" 10	7	27	219	59	27
" 11	5	28	238	60	35
		29	84	61	7
	201	30	294	62	14
		31	56	63	7
Age. Years.	No. of Applicants.	32	91	64	14
1	28	33	105	65	12
2	22	34	98	66	6
3	28	35	186	67	10
4	30	36	98	68	7
5	36	37	63	69	4
6	39	38	56	70	7
7	56	39	42	71	4
8	38	40	117	72	6
9	92	41	63	73	7
10	108	42	91	74	6
11	104	43	49	75	7
12	107	44	42	76	6
13	177	45	91	77	2
14	102	46	28	78	4
15	268	47	35	79	0
16	259	48	56	80	2

"Having investigated the general causes of depredation, of vagrancy, and mendicancy," say the Constabulary Commissioners, in the Government Reports of 1839 (p. 181), as developed by examinations of the previous lives of criminals or vagrants in the gaols, we find that scarcely in any cases is it ascribable to the pressure of unavoidable want or destitution, and that in the great mass of cases it arises from the temptation of obtaining property with a less degree of labour than by regular industry." Again, in p. 63 of the same Report, we are told that "the inquiries made by the most experienced officers into the causes of vagrancy manifest, that in all but

three or four per cent the prevalent cause was the impatience of steady labour." My investigations into this most important subject lead me, I may add, to the same conclusions. In order to understand the question of vagrancy thoroughly, however, we must not stop here; we must find out what, in its turn, is the cause of this impatience of steady labour; or, in other words, we must ascertain whence comes the desire to obtain property with a less degree of labour than by regular industry. Now, all "steady labour"—that is to say, the continuance of any labour for any length of time—is naturally irksome to us. We are all innately erratic—prone to wander both in thought and

action; and it is only by a vigorous effort, which is more or less painful to us at first, that we can keep ourselves to the steady prosecution of the same object, to the repeated performance of the same acts, or even to continuous attention to the same subject. Labour and effort are more or less irksome to us all. There are, however, two means by which this irksomeness may be not only removed, but transformed into a positive pleasure. One is, by the excitement of some impulse or purpose in the mind of the workman; and the other, by the inculcation of a habit of working. Purpose and habit are the only two modes by which labour can be rendered easy to us; and it is precisely because the vagrant is deficient in both that he has an aversion to work for his living, and wanders through the country without an object, or, indeed, a destination. A love of industry is not a gift, but a habit; it is an accomplishment rather than an endowment; and our purposes and principles do not arise spontaneously from the promptings of our own instincts and affections, but are the mature result of education, example, and deliberation. A vagrant, therefore, is an individual applying himself continuously to no one thing, nor pursuing any one aim for any length of time, but wandering from this subject to that, as well as from one place to another, because in him no industrial habits have been formed, nor any principle or purpose impressed upon his nature.

Pursuing the subject still further, we shall find that the cause of the vagrant's wandering through the country—and indeed through life—purposeless, objectless, and *unprincipled*, in the literal and strict meaning of the term, lies mainly in the defective state of our educational institutions; for the vagrants, as a class, it should be remembered, are not "educated." We teach a lad reading, writing, and arithmetic, and believe that in so doing we are developing the moral functions of his nature; whereas it is often this ability to *read merely*—that is to say, to read without the least moral perception—which becomes the instrument of the youth's moral depravity. The "Jack Sheppard" of Mr. Harrison Ainsworth is borrowed from the circulating library, and read aloud in the low lodging-houses in the evening by those who have a little education, to their companions who have none; and because the thief is there furbished up into the hero—because the author has tricked him out with a sort of brute insensibility to danger, made "noble blood flow in his veins," and tinselled him over with all kinds of showy sentimentality—the poor boys who listen, unable to see through the trumpery deception, are led to look up to the paltry thief as an object of admiration, and to make his conduct the *beau idéal* of their lives. Of all books, perhaps none has ever had so baneful an effect upon the young mind, taste, and principles as this. None has ever done more to degrade literature to the level of the

lowest licentiousness, or to stamp the author and the teacher as guilty of pandering to the most depraved propensities. Had Mr. Ainsworth been with me, and seen how he had viated the thoughts and pursuits of hundreds of mere boys—had he heard the names of the creatures of his morbid fancy given to youths at an age when they needed the best and truest counsellors—had he seen these poor little wretches, as I have seen them, grin with delight at receiving the degrading titles of "Blue-skin," "Dick Turpin," and "Jack Sheppard," he would, I am sure, ever rue the day which led him to paint the most degraded and abandoned of our race as the most noble of human beings. What wonder, then, that—taught either in no school at all, or else in that meretricious one which makes crime a glory, and dresses up vice as virtue—these poor lads should be unprincipled in every act they do—that they should be either literally actuated by no principles at all, or else fired with the basest motives and purposes, gathered from books which distort highway robbery into an act of noble enterprise, and dignify murder as justifiable homicide?

Nor are the habits of the young vagrant less cultivated than his motives. The formation of that particular habit which we term industry, and by which the youth is fitted to obtain his living as a man, is perhaps the most difficult part of all education. It commences at an age when the will of the individual is beginning to develop itself, and when the docile boy is changed into the impatient young man. Too great lenity, or too strict severity of government, therefore, becomes at this period of life dangerous. If the rule be too lax, the restless youth, disgusted with the monotony of pursuing the same task, or performing the same acts, day by day, neglects his work—till habits of indolence, rather than industry, are formed, and he is ultimately thrust upon the world, without either the means or the disposition of labouring for his living. If, on the other hand, the authority of the parent or master be too rigidly exercised, and the lad's power of endurance be taxed too severely, then the self-will of the youth is called into action; and growing restless and rebellious under the tyranny of his teachers, he throws off their restraint, and leaves them—with a hatred, instead of a love of labour engendered within him. That these are two of the primary causes of vagrancy, all my inquiries have tended to show. The proximate cause certainly lies in the impatience of steady labour; but the cause of this impatience is referable to the non-formation of any habit of industry in the vagrant, and the absence of this habit of industry is usually due to the neglect or the tyranny of the lad's parent or master. This is no theory, be it remembered. Whether it be the master of the workhouse, where the vagrants congregate every night—whether it be the young vagrant himself, or the more experienced tramp—that speaks upon

the subject, all agree in ascribing the vagabondism of youth to the same cause. There is, however, another phase of vagrancy still to be explained; viz. the transition of the working man into the regular tramp and beggar. This is the result of a habit of dependence, produced in the operative by repeated visits to the casual wards of the unions. A labouring man, or mechanic, deprived of employment in a particular town, sets out on a journey to seek work in some other part of the country. The mere fact of his so journeying to seek work shows that he has a natural aversion to become a burden to the parish. He is no sooner, however, become an inmate of the casual wards, and breakfasts and sups off the bounty of the workhouse, than he learns a most dangerous lesson—he learns how to live by the labour of others. His sense of independence may be shocked at first, but repeated visits to the same places soon deaden his feelings on this score; and he gradually, from continual disuse, loses his habit of labouring, and ultimately, by long custom, acquires a habit of "tramping" through the country, and putting up at the casual wards of the unions by the way. Thus, what was originally designed as a means of enabling the labouring man to obtain work, becomes the instrument of depriving him of employment, by rendering it no longer a necessity for him to seek it; and the independent workman is transformed after a time into the habitual tramp, and finally into the professional beggar and petty thief. Such characters, however, form but a small proportion of the great body of vagabonds continually traversing the country.

The vagrants are essentially the non-working, as distinguished from the hard-working, men of England. They are the very opposite to the industrious classes, with whom they are too often confounded. Of the really destitute working-men, among the vagrants seeking relief at the casual wards, the proportion is very small; the respectable mechanics being deterred by disgust from herding with the filth, infamy, disease, and vermin congregated in the tramp-wards of the unions, and preferring the endurance of the greatest privations before subjecting themselves to it. "I have had this view confirmed by several unfortunate persons," says Mr. Boase, in the Poor-law Report on Vagrancy: "they were apparently mechanics out of employment, who spoke of the horrors passed in a tramp-ward, and of their utter repugnance at visiting such places again." "The poor mechanic," says the porter at the Holborn workhouse, "will sit in the casual wards like a lost man—scared. It's shocking to think a decent mechanic's houseless," he adds; "when he's beat out, he's like a bird out of a cage: he doesn't know where to go, or how to get a bit." But the highest tribute ever paid to the sterling honesty and worth of the working men of this country, is to be found in the testimony of the master of the Wands-

worth and Clapham Union. "The destitute mechanics," he says, "are entirely a different class from the regular vagrant; they have different habits, and, indeed, different features. They are strictly honest. During the whole of my experience, I never knew a distressed artisan who applied for a night's shelter commit an act of theft; and I have seen them," he adds, "in the last stage of destitution. Occasionally they have sold the shirt and waistcoat off their backs, before they applied for admittance into the workhouse; while some of them have been so weak from long starvation, that they could scarcely reach the gate, and, indeed, had to be kept for several days in the infirmary, before their strength was recruited sufficiently to continue their journey." For myself, I can safely say, that my own experience fully bears out this honourable declaration of the virtues of our working men. Their extreme patience under the keenest privations is a thing that the wisest philosophers might envy; their sympathy and charity for their poorer brethren far exceeds, in its humble way, the benevolence and bounty of the rich; while their intelligence, considering the little time they have for study and reflection, is almost marvellous. In a word, their virtues are the spontaneous expressions of their simple natures; and their vices are the comparatively pardonable excesses, consequent upon the intensity of their toil. I say thus much in this place, because I am anxious that the public should no longer confound the honest, independent working men, with the vagrant beggars and pilferers of the country; and that they should see that the one class is as respectable and worthy, as the other is degraded and vicious.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VARIOUS CLASSES OF VAGRANTS.

I now come to the characteristics of vagrant life, as seen in the casual wards of the metropolitan unions. The subject is one of the most important with which I have yet had to deal, and the facts I have collected are sufficiently startling to give the public an idea of the great social bearings of the question; for the young vagrant is the budding criminal.

Previously to entering upon my inquiry into this subject, I consulted with a gentleman who had long paid considerable attention to the question, and who was, moreover, in a position peculiarly fitted for gaining the greatest experience, and arriving at the correctest notions upon the matter. I consulted, I say, with the gentleman referred to, as to the Poor-law officers, from whom I should be likely to obtain the best information; and I was referred by him to Mr. Knapp, the master of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union, as one of the most intelligent and best-informed upon the subject of vagrancy. I found that gentleman all that he had been represented to me

as being, and obtained from him the following statement, which, as an analysis of the vagrant character, and a description of the habits and propensities of the young vagabond, has, perhaps, never been surpassed.

He had filled the office of master of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union for three years, and immediately before that he was the relieving officer for the same union for upwards of two years. He was guardian of Clapham parish for four years previously to his being elected relieving officer. He was a member of the first board of guardians that was formed under the new Poor-law Act, and he has long given much attention to the habits of the vagrants that have come under his notice or care. He told me that he considered a casual ward necessary in every union, because there is always a migratory population, consisting of labourers seeking employment in other localities, and destitute women travelling to their husbands or friends. He thinks a casual ward is necessary for the shelter and relief of such parties, since the law will not permit them to beg. These, however, are by far the smaller proportion of those who demand admittance into the casual ward. Formerly, they were not five per cent of the total number of casuals. The remainder consisted of youths, prostitutes, Irish families, and a few professional beggars. The youths formed more than one-half of the entire number, and their ages were from twelve to twenty. The largest number were seventeen years old—indeed, he adds, just that age when youth becomes disengaged from parental control. These lads had generally run away, either from their parents or masters, and many had been reared to a life of vagrancy. They were mostly shrewd and acute youths; some had been very well educated. Ignorance, to use the gentleman's own words, is certainly not the prevailing characteristic of the class; indeed, with a few exceptions, he would say it is the reverse. These lads are mostly distinguished by their aversion to continuous labour of any kind. He never knew them to work—they are, indeed, essentially the idle and the vagabond. Their great inclination is to be on the move, and wandering from place to place; and they appear, he says, to receive a great deal of pleasure from the assembly and conversation of the casual ward. They are physically stout, healthy lads, and certainly not emaciated or sickly. They belong especially to the able-bodied class, being, as he says, full of health and mischief. When in London, they live in the day-time by holding horses, and carrying parcels from the steam-piers and railway termini. Some loiter about the markets in the hope of a job, and others may be seen in the streets picking up bones and rags, or along the water-side searching for pieces of old metal, or anything that may be sold at the marine-store shops. They have nearly all been in prison more than once,

and several a greater number of times than they are years old. They are the most dishonest of all thieves, having not the least respect for the property of even the members of their own class. He tells me he has frequently known them to rob one another. They are very stubborn and self-willed. They have often broken every window in the oakum-room, rather than do the required work. They are a most difficult class to govern, and are especially restive under the least restraint; they can ill brook control, and they find great delight in thwarting the authorities of the workhouse. They are particularly fond of amusements of all kinds. My informant has often heard them discuss the merits of the different actors at the minor theatres and saloons. Sometimes they will elect a chairman, and get up a regular debate, and make speeches from one end of the ward to the other. Many of them will make very clever comic orations; others delight in singing comic songs, especially those upon the workhouse and gaols. He never knew them love reading. They mostly pass under fictitious names. Some will give the name of "John Russell," or "Robert Peel," or "Richard Cobden." They often come down to the casual wards in large bodies of twenty or thirty, with sticks hidden down the legs of their trousers, and with these they rob and beat those who do not belong to their own gang. The gang will often consist of a hundred lads, all under twenty, one-fourth of whom regularly come together in a body; and in the casual ward they generally arrange where to meet again on the following night. In the winter of 1846, the guardians of Wandsworth and Clapham, sympathising with their ragged and wretched appearance, and desirous of affording them the means of obtaining an honest livelihood, gave my informant instructions to offer an asylum to any who might choose to remain in the workhouse. Under this arrangement, about fifty were admitted. The majority were under seventeen years of age. Some of them remained a few days—others a few weeks—none stopped longer than three months; and the generality of them decamped over the wall, taking with them the clothes of the union. The confinement, restraint, and order of the workhouse were especially irksome to them. This is the character of the true vagrant, for whom my informant considers no provision whatsoever should be made at the unions, believing as he does that most of them have settlements in or around London. The casual wards, he tells me, he knows to have been a great encouragement to the increase of these characters. Several of the lads that have come under his care had sought shelter and concealment in the casual wards, after having absconded from their parents. In one instance, the father and mother of a lad had unavailingly sought their son in every direction: he discovered that the

youth had ran away, and he sent him home in the custody of one of the inmates; but when the boy got to within two or three doors of his father's residence, he turned round and scampered off. The mother afterwards came to the union in a state of frantic grief, and said that he had disappeared two years before. My informant believes that the boy has never been heard of by his parents since. Others he has restored to their parents, and some of the young vagrants who have died in the union have, on their death-beds, disclosed the names and particulars of their families, who have been always of a highly respectable character. To these he has sent, and on their visits to their children scenes of indescribable grief and anguish have taken place. He tells me he is convinced that it is the low lodging-houses and the casual wards of the unions that offer a ready means for youths absconding from their homes, immediately on the least disagreement or restraint. In most of the cases that he has investigated, he has found that the boys have left home after some rebuke or quarrel with their parents. On restoring one boy to his father, the latter said that, though the lad was not ten years old, he had been in almost every workhouse in London; and the father bitterly complained of the casual wards for offering shelter to a youth of such tender years. But my informant is convinced that, even if the casual wards throughout the country were entirely closed—the low lodging-houses being allowed to remain in their present condition—the evil would not be remedied, if at all abated. A boy after running away from home, generally seeks shelter in one of the cheap lodging-houses, and there he makes acquaintance with the most depraved of both sexes. The boys at the house become his regular companions, and he is soon a confirmed vagrant and thief like the rest. The youths of the vagrant class are particularly distinguished for their libidinous propensities. They frequently come to the gate with a young prostitute, and with her they go off in the morning. With this girl, they will tramp through the whole of the country. They are not remarkable for a love of drink,—indeed, my informant never saw a regular vagrant in a state of intoxication, nor has he known them to exhibit any craving for liquor. He has had many drunkards under his charge, but the vagrant is totally distinct, having propensities not less vicious, but of a very different kind. He considers the young tramps to be generally a class of lads possessing the keenest intellect, and of a highly enterprising character. They seem to have no sense of danger, and to be especially delighted with such acts as involve any peril. They are likewise characterised by their exceeding love of mischief. The property destroyed in the union of which my informant is the master has been of considerable value, consisting of windows broken, sash-frames demolished, beds and

bedding torn to pieces, and rags burnt. They will frequently come down in large gangs, on purpose to destroy the property in the union. They generally are of a most restless and volatile disposition. They have great quickness of perception, but little power of continuous attention or perseverance. They have a keen sense of the ridiculous, and are not devoid of deep feeling. He has often known them to be dissolved to tears on his remonstrating with them on the course they were following—and then they promise amendment; but in a few days, and sometimes hours, they would forget all, and return to their old habits. In the summer they make regular tours through the country, visiting all places that they have not seen, so that there is scarcely one that is not acquainted with every part within 100 miles of London, and many with all England. They are perfectly organised, so that any regulation affecting their comforts or interests becomes known among the whole body in a remarkably short space of time. As an instance, he informs me that on putting out a notice that no able-bodied man or youth would be received in the casual ward after a certain day, there was not a single application made by any such party, the regular vagrants having doubtless informed each other that it was useless seeking admission at this union. In the winter the young vagrants come to London, and find shelter in the asylums for the houseless poor. At this season of the year, the number of vagrants in the casual wards would generally be diminished one-half. The juvenile vagrants constitute one of the main sources from which the criminals of the country are continually recruited and augmented. Being repeatedly committed to prison for disorderly conduct and misdemeanour, the gaol soon loses all terrors for them; and, indeed, they will frequently destroy their own clothes, or the property of the union, in order to be sent there. Hence they soon become practised and dexterous thieves, and my informant has detected several burglaries by the property found upon them. The number of this class is stated, in the Poor-law Report on Vagrancy, to have been, in 1848, no less than 16,086, and they form one of the most restless, discontented, vicious, and dangerous elements of society. At the period of any social commotion, they are sure to be drawn towards the scene of excitement in a vast concourse. During the Chartist agitation, in the June quarter of the year 1848, the number of male casuals admitted into the Wandsworth and Clapham Union rose from 2501 to 3968, while the females (their companions) increased from 579 to 1388.

Of the other classes of persons admitted into the casual wards, the Irish generally form a large proportion. At the time when juvenile vagrancy prevailed to an alarming extent, the Irish hardly dared to show themselves in the

casual wards, for the lads would beat them and plunder them of whatever they might have—either the produce of their begging, or the ragged kit they carried with them. Often my informant has had to quell violent disturbances in the night among these characters. The Irish tramp generally makes his appearance with a large family, and frequently with three or four generations together—grandfather, grandmother, father, and mother, and children—all coming at the same time. In the year ending June, 1848, the Irish vagrants increased to so great an extent that, of the entire number of casuals relieved, more than one-third in the first three quarters, and more than two-thirds in the last quarter, were from the sister island. Of the Irish vagrants, the worst class—that is the poorest and most abject—came over to this country by way of Newport, in Wales. The expense of the passage to that port was only 2s. 6d.; whereas the cost of the voyage to Liverpool and London was considerably more, and consequently the class brought over by that way were less destitute. The Irish vagrants were far more orderly than the English. Out of the vast number received into the casual ward of this union during the distress in Ireland, it is remarkable that not one ever committed an act of insubordination. They were generally very grateful for the relief afforded, and appeared to subsist entirely by begging. Some of them were not particularly fond of work, but they were invariably honest, says my informant—at least so far as his knowledge went. They were exceedingly filthy in their habits, and many diseased.

These constitute the two large and principal classes of vagrants. The remainder generally consist of persons temporarily destitute, whereas the others are habitually so. The temporarily destitute are chiefly railway and agricultural labourers, and a few mechanics travelling in search of employment. These are easily distinguishable from the regular vagrant; indeed, a glance is sufficient to the practised eye. They are the better class of casuals, and those for whom the wards are expressly designed, but they only form a very small proportion of the vagrants applying for shelter. In the height of vagrancy, they formed not one per cent of the entire number admitted. Indeed, such was the state of the casual wards, that the destitute mechanics and labourers preferred walking through the night to availing themselves of the accommodation. Lately, the artisans and labourers have increased greatly in proportion, owing to the system adopted for the exclusion of the habitual vagrant, and the consequent decline of their number. The working man travelling in search of employment is now generally admitted into what are called the receiving wards of the workhouse, instead of the tramp-room, and he is usually exceedingly grateful for the accommodation. My informant tells me that persons of this class seldom return to the workhouse after

one night's shelter, and this is a conclusive proof that the regular working-man seldom passes into an habitual beggar. They are an entirely distinct class, having different habits, and, indeed, different features, and I am assured that they are strictly honest. During the whole experience of my informant, he never knew one who applied for a night's shelter commit one act of dishonesty, and he has seen them in the last stage of destitution. Occasionally they have sold the shirt and waistcoat off their backs before they applied for admittance into the workhouse, while some of them have been so weak from long starvation, that they could scarcely reach the gate. Such persons are always allowed to remain several days to recruit their strength. It is for such as these that my informant considers the casual wards indispensable to every well-conducted union—whereas it is his opinion that the habitual vagrant, as contradistinguished from the casual vagrant or wayfaring poor, should be placed under the management of the police, at the charge of the union.

Let me, however, first run over, as briefly as possible, the several classes of vagrants falling under the notice of the parish authorities. The different kinds of vagrants or tramps to be found in the casual wards of the unions throughout the country, may be described as follows:—"The more important class, from its increasing numbers," says Mr. Boase, in the Poor-law Report upon Vagrancy, "is that of the regular young English vagabond, generally the native of a large town. He is either a run-away apprentice, or he has been driven from home by the cruelty of his parents, or allowed by them to go wild in the streets: in some cases he is an orphan, and has lost his father and mother in early life. Having no ties to bind him, he travels about the country, being sure of a meal, and a roof to shelter him at night. The youths of this class are principally of from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. They often travel in parties of two or three—frequently in large bodies, with young women, as abandoned as themselves, in company."

Approaching these in character are the young countrymen who have absconded—perhaps for some petty poaching offence—and to whom the facility for leading an idle vagabond life has proved too great a temptation.

The next class of vagrants is the sturdy English mendicant. He, though not a constant occupant of the tramp-ward in the workhouse, frequently makes his appearance there to partake of the shelter, when he has spent his last shilling in dissipation.

Besides these, there are a few calling themselves agricultural labourers, who are really such, and who are to be readily distinguished. There are also a few mechanics—chiefly tailors, shoemakers, and masons, who are occasionally destitute. The amount of those really destitute, however, is very small in proportion to the numbers relieved.

Of the age and sex of tramps, the general proportion seems to be four-fifths male and one-fifth female.

Of the female English tramps, little can be said, but that they are in great part prostitutes of the lowest class. The proportion of really destitute women in the tramp-wards (generally widows with young children) is greater than that of men—probably from the ability to brave the cold night wind being less in the female, and the love of the children getting the shelter, above dread of vile association. Girls of thirteen or fourteen years old, who run away from masters or factory employment, often find shelter in the tramp-ward.

The Irish, who, till very recently, formed the majority of the applicants for casual relief, remain to be described. These can scarcely be classified in any other way than as those who come to England to labour, and those who come to beg. The former class, however, yield readily to their disposition to idleness—the difficulties of providing supper, breakfast, and lodging for themselves being removed by the workhouse. This class are physically superior to the mass of Irish vagrants. It appears that for very many years considerable numbers of these have annually come to England in the spring to work at hay-harvest, remaining for corn-harvest and hop-picking, and then have carried home their earnings in the autumn, seldom resorting to begging. Since the failure of the potato crop greater numbers have come to England, and the tramp-ward has been their principal refuge, and an inducement to many to remain in the country. A great many harvest men land at Newport and the Welsh ports; but by far the greater proportion of the Irish in Wales are, or were, women with small children, old men apparently feeble, pregnant women, and boys about ten years old. They are brought over by coal-vessels as a return cargo (living ballast) at very low fares, (2s. 6d. is the highest sum), huddled together like pigs, and communicating disease and vermin on their passage.

Harriet Huxtable, the manager of the tramp-house at Newport, says:—"There is hardly an Irish family that came over and applied to me, but we have found a member or two of it ill, some in a shocking filthy state. They don't live long, diseased as they are. They are very remarkable; they will eat salt by basins' full, and drink a great quantity of water after. I have frequently known those who could not have been hungry, eat cabbage-leaves and other refuse from the ash-heap. I really believe they would eat almost anything."

"A remarkable fact is, that all the Irish whom I met on my route between Wales and London," says Mr. Boase, "said they came from Cork county. Mr. John, the relieving officer at Cardiff, on his examination, says, 'that not 1 out of every 100 of the Irish come from any other county than Cork.'"

In the township of Warrington, the number

No. 96.

of tramps relieved between the 25th of March, 1847, and the 25th of March, 1848, was:—

Irish	12,038
English	4,701
Scotch	427
Natives of other places	156

Making a total of 17,322

Of the original occupations or trades of the vagrants applying for relief at the different unions throughout the country, there are no returns. As, however, a considerable portion of these were attracted to London on the opening of the Metropolitan Asylums for the Houseless Poor, we may, by consulting the Society's yearly Reports, where an account of the callings of those receiving shelter in such establishments is always given, be enabled to arrive at some rough estimate as to the state of destitution and vagrancy existing among the several classes of labourers and artisans for several years.

The following table, being an average drawn from the returns for seventeen years of the occupation of the persons admitted into the Asylums for the Houseless Poor, which I have been at considerable trouble in forming, exhibits the only available information upon this subject, synoptically arranged:—

Factory employment	1 in every 3
Hawkers	4
Labourers (agricultural)	12
Seamen	12
Charwomen and washerwomen	13
Labourers (general)	17
Waddingmakers	35
Smiths and ironfounders	36
Weavers	38
Brickmakers	39
Ropemakers	41
Braziers	55
Papermakers and stainers	58
Skindressers	58
Basketmakers	62
Bricklayers, plasterers, and slaters	62
Gardeners	67
Filecutters	70
Sawyers	73
Turners	74
Wireworkers	75
Cutlers	77
Harnessmakers and saddlers	80
Stonemasons	88
Dyers	94
Chimneysweeps	97
Errand boys	99
Porters	99
Painters, plumbers, and glaziers	119
Cabinetmakers and upholsterers	128
Shoemakers	130
Compositors and printers	142
Brushmakers	145
Carpenters, joiners, and wheelwrights	150
Bakers	167

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Brassfounders	1 in every 177
Tailors	177
Combmakers	178
Coopers	178
Surveyors	198
Fellmongers	203
Glasscutters	229
Bedsteadmakers	235
Average for all London	219
Butchers	248
Bookbinders	255
Mendicants	256
Engineers	265
Miners	267
Lacemakers	273
Poulterers	273
Furriers	274
Straw-bonnetmakers	277
Trimming and buttonmakers	277
Ostlers and grooms	286
Drovers	297
Hairdressers	329
Pipemakers	340
Clerks and shopmen	346
Hatters	350
Tinmen	354
Tallowchandlers	364
Servants	377
Corkcutters	380
Jewellers and watchmakers	411
Umbrella-makers	415
Sailmakers	455
Carvers and gilders	500
Gunsmiths	554
Trunkmakers	569
Chairmakers	586
Fishmongers	643
Tanners	643
Musicians	730
Leatherdressers and curriers	802
Coachmakers	989
Engravers	1,133
Shipwrights	1,358
Artists	1,374
Drapers	2,047
Milliners and dressmakers	10,390

Of the disease and fever which mark the course of the vagrants wheresoever they go, I have before spoken. The "tramp-fever," as the most dangerous infection of the casual wards is significantly termed, is of a typhoid character, and seems to be communicated particularly to those who wash the clothes of the parties suffering from it. This was likewise one of the characteristics of cholera. That the habitual vagrants should be the means of spreading a pestilence over the country in their wanderings will not be wondered at, when we find it stated in the Poor-law Report on Vagrancy, that "in very few workhouses do means exist of drying the clothes of these paupers when they come in wet, and it often happens that a considerable number are, of necessity, placed together wet, filthy, infested with vermin, and diseased,

in a small, unventilated space." "The majority of tramps, again," we are told, "have a great aversion to being washed and cleaned. A regular trumper cannot bear it; but a distressed man would be thankful for it."

The cost incurred for the cure of the vagrant sick in 1848, was considerably more than the expense of the food dispensed to them. Out of 13,406 vagrants relieved at the Wandsworth and Clapham Union in 1848, there were 332 diseased, or ill with the fever.

The number of vagrants relieved throughout England and Wales in the same year was 1,647,975; and supposing that the sickness among these prevailed to the same extent as it did among the casuals at Wandsworth (according to the Vagrancy Report, it appears to have been much more severe in many places), there would have been as many as 40,812 sick in the several unions throughout the country in 1848. The cost of relieving the 332 sick at Wandsworth was 300*l.*; at the same rate, the expense of the 40,812 sick throughout the country unions would amount to 36,878*l.* According to the above proportion, the number of sick relieved in the metropolitan unions would have been 7678, and the cost for their relief would amount to 6931*l.*

Of the tide of crime which, like that of pestilence, accompanies the stream of vagrants, there are equally strong and conclusive proofs. "The most prominent body of delinquents in the rural districts," says the Report of the Constabulary Commissioners, "are vagrants, and these vagrants appear to consist of two classes: first, the habitual depredators, house-breakers, horse-stealers, and common thieves; secondly, of vagrants, properly so called, who seek alms as mendicants. Besides those classes who travel from fair to fair, and from town to town, in quest of dishonest gains, there are numerous classes who make incursions from the provincial towns upon the adjacent rural districts."

"The classes of depredators who perambulate the country (says the same Report) are the vagrants, properly so called. Upwards of 18,000 commitments per annum of persons for the offence of vagrancy, mark the extent of the body from which they are taken.

"It will be seen that vagrancy, or the habit of wandering abroad, under colour either of distress, or of some ostensible, though illegal occupation, having claims on the sympathies of the uninformed, constitutes one great source of delinquency, and especially of juvenile delinquency. The returns show that the vagrant classes pervade every part of the country, rendering property insecure, propagating pernicious habits, and afflicting the minds of the sensitive with false pictures of suffering, and levying upon them an offensive impost for the relief of that destitution for which a heavy tax is legally levied in the shape of poor's rates.

"Mr. Thomas Narill, a sergeant of the

Bristol police, was asked—'What proportion of the vagrants do you think are thieves, that make it a point to take anything for which they find a convenient opportunity?' 'We have found it so invariably.' 'Have you ever seen the children who go about as vagrants turn afterwards from vagrancy to common thieving,—thieving wholly or chiefly?' 'We have found it several times.' 'Therefore the suppression of vagrancy or mendicity would be to that extent the suppression of juvenile delinquency?' 'Yes, of course.'

Mr. J. Perry, another witness, states:—"I believe vagrancy to be the first step towards the committal of felony, and I am supported in that belief by the number of juvenile vagrants who are brought before the magistrates as thieves."

An officer, appointed specially to take measures against vagrancy in Manchester, was asked,—“Does your experience enable you to state that the large proportion of vagrants are thieves too, whenever they come in the way of thieving?” “Yes, and I should call the larger proportion there thieves.” “Then, from what you have observed of them, would you say that the suppression of vagrancy would go a great way to the suppression of a great quantity of depredation?” “I am sure of it.”

The same valuable Report furnishes us with a table of the numbers and character of the known depredators and suspected persons frequenting five of the principal towns; from which it appears that in these towns alone there are 28,706 persons of known bad character. According to the average proportion of these to the population, there will be in the other large towns nearly 32,000 persons of a similar character, and upwards of 69,000 of such persons dispersed throughout the rest of the country. Adding these together, we shall have as many as 130,000 persons of known bad character living in England and Wales, without the walls of the prisons. To form an accurate notion of the total number of the criminal population, we must add to the above amount the number of persons resident within the walls of the prisons. These, according to the last census, are 19,888, which, added to the 130,000 above enumerated, gives within a fraction of 150,000 individuals for the entire criminal population of the country.

In order to arrive at an estimate of the number of known depredators, or suspected persons, continually tramping through the country, we must deduct from the number of persons of bad character without the walls of the prisons, such as are not of migratory habits; and it will be seen on reference to the table above given, that a large proportion of the classes there specified have usually some fixed residence (those with an asterisk set before them may be said to be non-migratory). As many as 10,000 individuals out of the 20,000 and odd above given certainly do not belong

to the tramping tribe; and we may safely say that there must be as many as 35,000 more in the country, who, though of known bad character, are not tramps like the rest. Hence, in order to ascertain the number of depredators and suspected persons belonging to the tramping or vagrant class, we must deduct 10,000 + 35,000 from 85,000, which gives us 40,000 for the number of known bad characters continually traversing the country.

This sum, though arrived at in a very different manner from the estimate given in my last letter, agrees very nearly with the amount there stated. We may therefore, I think, without fear of erring greatly upon the matter, assert that our criminal population, within and without the walls of the prisons, consists of 150,000 individuals, of whom nearly one-third belong to the vagrant class; while, of those without the prison walls, upwards of one half are persons who are continually tramping through the country.

The number of commitments for vagrancy throughout the country is stated, in the Constabulary Report, at upwards of 18,000 per annum. This amount, large as it is, will not surprise when we learn from Mr. Pigott's Report on Vagrancy to the Poor-law Commissioners, that "it is becoming a system with the vagrants to pass away the cold months by fortnightly halts in different gaols. As soon as their fourteen days have expired they make their way to some other union-house, and commit the same depredation there, in order to be sent to gaol again."

"There are some characters," say the officers of the Derby Union, in the same Report, "who come on purpose to be committed, avowedly. These have generally itch, venereal disease, and lice, all together. Then there are some who tear their clothes for the purpose of being committed."

I shall now give as full an account as lies in my power of the character and consequences of vagrancy. That it spreads a moral pestilence through the country, as terrible and as devastating as the physical pest which accompanies it wherever it is found, all the evidence goes to prove. Nevertheless, the facts which I have still to adduce in connexion with that class of vagrancy which does not necessarily come under the notice of the parish authorities, are of so overpowering a character, that I hope and trust they may be the means of rousing every earnest man in the kingdom to a sense of the enormous evils that are daily going on around him.

The number of vagrants taken into custody by the police, according to the Metropolitan Criminal Returns for 1848, was 5598; they belonged to the trades cited in the subjoined table, where I have calculated the proportionate number of vagrants furnished by each of the occupations, according to the total number of individuals belonging to the class.

Toolmakers	1 in every 33·9	Hatters and trimmers.	250·4	Glassmakers, &c.	580·5
Labourers	45·9	Musicians	292·0	Butchers	608·0
Weavers	75·6	Turners, &c.	308·8	Laundresses	623·8
Cutlers	82·1	Shoemakers	310·5	Coachmakers	709·3
French polishers	109·7	Surveyors	326·5	Grocers	712·2
Glovers, &c.	112·8	Average for all London	334·7	General and marine storedealers	721·2
Corkeutters	114·2	Gardeners	341·8	Jewellers	922·7
Brassfounders	119·1	Tobacconists	344·6	Artificial flowermakers	1025·0
Smiths	129·1	Painters	359·5	Brushmakers	1077·5
Bricklayers	143·4	Bakers	364·4	Ironmongers	1177·0
Papermakers, stainers, &c.	188·1	Tailors	373·2	Watchmakers	1430·0
Fishmongers	207·3	Milliners	451·7	Engineers	1433·3
Curriers	211·6	Clerks	453·7	Dyers	1930·0
Masons	231·4	Printers	461·6	Servants	2444·9
Tinkers and tinmen	236·3	Sweeps	516·5	Drapers	2456·5
Sawyers	248·1	Opticians	536·0	Bookbinders	2749·5
Carvers and gilders	250·3	Saddlers	542·7		
		Coach and cabmen	542·8		

The causes and encouragements of vagrancy are two-fold,—*direct* and *indirect*. The roving disposition to which, as I have shown, vagrancy is *directly* ascribable, proceeds (as I have said) partly from a certain physical conformation or temperament, but mainly from a non-inculcation of industrial habits and moral purposes in youth. The causes from which the vagabondism of the young *indirectly* proceeds are:—

1. The neglect or tyranny of parents or masters. (This appears to be a most prolific source.)

2. Bad companions.

3. Bad books, which act like the bad companions in depraving the taste, and teaching the youth to consider that approvable which to all rightly constituted minds is morally loathsome.

4. Bad amusements—as penny-theatres, where the scenes and characters described in the bad books are represented in a still more attractive form. Mr. Ainsworth's "Rookwood," with Dick Turpin "in his habit as he lived in," is now in the course of being performed nightly at one of the East-end saloons.

5. Bad institutions—as, for instance, the different refuges scattered throughout the country, and which, enabling persons to live without labour, are the means of attracting large numbers of the most idle and dissolute classes to the several cities where the charities are dispensed. Captain Carroll, C.B., R.N., chief of police, speaking of the Refuges for the Destitute in Bath, and of a kindred institution which distributes bread and soup, says,—“I consider those institutions an attraction to this city for vagrants.” At Liverpool, Mr. Henry Simpson said of a Night Asylum, supported by voluntary contributions, and established for several years in this town—“This charity was used by quite a different class of persons from those for whom it was designed. A vast number of abandoned characters, known thieves and prostitutes, found nightly shelter there.” “The chief inducement to vagrancy

in the town,” says another Report, speaking of a certain part of the North Riding of York, “is the relief given by mistaken but benevolent individuals, more particularly by the poorer class. Instances have occurred where the names of such benevolent persons have been found in the possession of vagrants, obtained, no doubt, from their fellow-travellers.”

6. Vagrancy is largely due to, and, indeed, chiefly maintained by the low lodging-houses.

STATEMENTS OF VAGRANTS.

The first vagrant was one who had the thorough look of a “professional.” He was literally a mass of rags and filth. He was, indeed, exactly what in the Act of Henry VIII. is denominated a “valiant beggar.” He stood near upon six feet high, was not more than twenty-five, and had altogether the frame and constitution of a stalwart labouring man. His clothes, which were of fustian and corduroy, tied close to his body with pieces of string, were black and shiny with filth, which looked more like pitch than grease. He had no shirt, as was plain from the fact that, where his clothes were torn, his bare skin was seen. The ragged sleeves of his fustian jacket were tied like the other parts of his dress, close to his wrists, with string. This was clearly to keep the bleak air from his body. His cap was an old, brimless “wide-awake,” and when on his head gave the man a most unprepossessing appearance. His story was as follows:—

“I am a carpet-weaver by trade. I served my time to it. My father was a clerk in a shoe-thread manufactory at ——. He got 35s. a-week, and his house, coals, and candles found him. He lived very comfortably; indeed, I was very happy. Before I left home, I knew none of the cares of the world that I have known since I left him. My father and mother are living still. He is still as well off as when I was at home. I know this, because I have heard from him twice, and seen him once. He won't do anything to assist me. I have

transgressed so many times, that he won't take me in hand any more. I will tell you the truth, you may depend upon it; yes, indeed, I would, even if it were to injure myself. He has tried me many times, but now he has given me up. At the age of twenty-one he told me to go from home and seek a living for myself. He said he had given me a home ever since I was a child, but now I had come to manhood I was able to provide for myself. He gave me a good education, and I might have been a better scholar at the present time, had I not neglected my studies. He put me to a day-school in the town when I was eight years old, and I continued there till I was between twelve and thirteen. I learnt reading, writing, and ciphering. I was taught the catechism, the history of England, geography, and drawing. My father was a very harsh man when he was put out of his way. He was a very violent temper when he was vexed, but kind to us all when he was pleased. I have five brothers and six sisters. He never beat me more than twice, to my remembrance. The first time he thrashed me with a cane, and the last with a horsewhip. I had stopped out late at night. I was then just rising sixteen, and had left school. I am sure those thrashings did me no good, but made me rather worse than before. I was a self-willed lad, and determined, if I couldn't get my will in one way, I would have it another. After the last thrashing he told me he would give me some trade, and after that he would set me off and get rid of me. Then I was bound apprentice as a carpet-weaver for three years. My master was a very kind one. I runned away once. The cause of my going off was a quarrel with one of the workmen that was put over me. He was very harsh, and I scarce could do anything to please him; so I made up my mind to leave. The first place I went when I bolted was to Crewkerne, in Somersetshire. There I asked for employment at carpet-weaving. I got some, and remained there three days, when my father found out where I was, and sent my brother and a special constable after me. They took me from the shop where I was at work, and brought me back to ——, and would have sent me to prison had I not promised to behave myself, and serve my time out as I ought. I went to work again; and when the expiration of my apprenticeship occurred, my father said to me, ‘Sam, you have a trade at your fingers’ ends: you are able to provide for yourself.’ So then I left home. I was twenty-one years of age. He gave me money, 3l. 10s., to take me into Wales, where I told him I should go. I was up for going about through the country. I made my father believe I was going into Wales to get work; but all I wanted was, to go and see the place. After I had runned away once from my apprenticeship, I found it very hard to stop at home. I couldn't bring myself to work somehow. While I sat at the

work, I thought I should like to be away in the country: work seemed a burden to me. I found it very difficult to stick to anything for a long time; so I made up my mind, when my time was out, that I'd be off roving, and see a little of life. I went by the packet from Bristol to Newport. After being there three weeks, I had spent all the money that I had brought from home. I spent it in drinking—most of it, and idling about. After that I was obliged to sell my clothes, &c. The first thing I sold was my watch; I got 2l. 5s. for that. Then I was obliged to part with my suit of clothes. For these I got 1l. 5s. With this I started from Newport to go farther up over the hills. I liked this kind of life much better than working, while the money lasted. I was in the public-house three parts of my time out of four. I was a great slave to drink. I began to like drink when I was between thirteen and fourteen. At that time my uncle was keeping a public-house, and I used to go there, backwards and forward, more or less every week. Whenever I went to see my uncle he gave me some beer. I very soon got to like it so much, that, while an apprentice, I would spend all I could get in liquor. This was the cause of my quarrels with my father, and when I went away to Newport I did so to be my own master, and drink as much as I pleased, without anybody saying anything to me about it. I got up to Nant-y-glô, and there I sought for work at the iron-foundry, but I could not get it. I stopped at this place three weeks, still drinking. The last day of the three weeks I sold the boots off my feet to get food, for all my money and clothes were now gone. I was sorry then that I had ever left my father's house; but, alas! I found it too late. I didn't write home to tell them how I was off; my stubborn temper would not allow me. I then started off barefoot, begging my way from Nant-y-glô to Monmouth. I told the people that I was a carpet-weaver by trade, who could not get any employment, and that I was obliged to travel the country against my own wish. I didn't say a word about the drink—that would never have done. I only took 2½d. on the road, 19 miles long; and I'm sure I must have asked assistance from more than a hundred people. They said, some of them, that they had ‘nout’ for me; and others did give me a bit of ‘bara caws,’ or ‘bara minny’ (that is, bread and cheese, or bread and butter). Money is very scarce among the Welsh, and what they have they are very fond of. They don't mind giving food; if you wanted a bagful you might have it there of the working people. I inquired for a night's lodging at the union in Monmouth. That was the first time I ever asked for shelter in a workhouse in my life. I was admitted into the tramp-room. Oh, I felt then that I would much rather be in prison than in such a place, though I never knew what the inside of a prison was—no, not then. I thought of the kindness of my father and mother. I

would have been better, but I knew that, as I had been carrying on, I never could expect shelter under my father's roof any more; I knew he would not have taken me in had I gone back, or I would have returned. Oh, I was off from home, and I didn't much trouble my head about it after a few minutes; I plucked up my spirits and soon forgot where I was. I made no male friends in the union; I was savage that I had so hard a bed to lie upon; it was nothing more than the bare boards, and a rug to cover me. I knew very well it wasn't my bed, but still I thought I ought to have a better. I merely felt annoyed at its being so bad a place, and didn't think much about the rights of it. In the morning I was turned out, and after I had left I picked up with a young woman, who had slept in the union over-night. I said I was going on the road across country to Birmingham, and I axed her to go with me. I had never seen her before. She consented, and we went along together, begging our way. We passed as man and wife, and I was a carpet-weaver out of employment. We slept in unions and lodging-houses by the way. In the lodging-houses we lived together as man and wife, and in the unions we were separated. I never stole anything during all this time. After I got to Birmingham I made my way to Wolverhampton. My reason for going to Wolverhampton was, that there was a good many weavers there, and I thought I should make a good bit of money by begging of them. Oh, yes, I have found that I could always get more money out of my own trade than any other people. I did so well at Wolverhampton, begging, that I stopped there three weeks. I never troubled my head whether I was doing right or wrong by asking my brother-weavers for a portion of their hard earnings to keep me in idleness. Many a time I have given part of my wages to others myself. I can't say that I would have given it to them if I had known they wouldn't work like me. I wouldn't have worked sometimes if I could have got it. I can't tell why, but somehow it was painful to me to stick long at anything. To tell the truth, I loved a roving, idle life. I would much rather have been on the road than at my home. I drank away all I got, and feared and cared for nothing. When I got drunk over-night, it would have been impossible for me to have gone to work in the morning, even if I could have got it. The drink seemed to take all the work out of me. This oftentimes led me to think of what my father used to tell me, that 'the bird that can sing and won't sing ought to be made to sing.' During my stay in Wolverhampton I lived at a tramper's house, and there I fell in with two men well acquainted with the town, and they asked me to join them in breaking open a shop. No, sir, no, I didn't give a thought whether I was doing right or wrong at it. I didn't think my father would ever know anything at all about it, so I didn't care. I liked my mother best,

much the best. She had always been a kind, good soul to me, often kept me from my father's blows, and helped me to things unknown to my father. But when I was away on the road I gave no heed to her. I didn't think of either father or mother till after I was taken into custody for that same job. Well, I agreed to go with the other two; they were old hands at the business—regular housebreakers. We went away between twelve and one at night. It was pitch dark. My two pals broke into the back part of the house, and I stopped outside to keep watch. After watching for about a quarter of an hour, a policeman came up to me and asked what I was stopping there for. I told him I was waiting for a man that was in a public-house at the corner. This led him to suspect me, it being so late at night. He went to the public-house to see whether it was open, and found it shut, and then came back to me. As he was returning he saw my two comrades coming through the back window (that was the way they had got in). He took us all three in custody; some of the passers-by assisted him in seizing us. The other two had six months' imprisonment each, and I, being a stranger, had only fourteen days. When I was sent to prison, I thought of my mother. I would have written to her, but couldn't get leave. Being the first time I ever was nailed, I was very downhearted at it. I didn't say I'd give it up. While I was locked up, I thought I'd go to work again, and be a sober man, when I got out. These thoughts used to come over me when I was 'on the stepper;' that is, on the wheel. But I concealed all them thoughts in my breast. I said nothing to no one. My mother was the only one that I ever thought upon. When I got out of prison, all these thoughts went away from me, and I went again at my old tricks. From Wolverhampton I went to Manchester, and from Manchester I came to London, begging and stealing wherever I had a chance. This is not my first year in London. I tell you the truth, because I am known here; and if I tell you a lie, you'll say 'You spoke an untruth in one thing, and you'll do so in another.' The first time I was in London, I was put in prison fourteen days for begging, and after I had a month at Westminster Bridewell, for begging and abusing the policeman. Sometimes I'd think I'd rather go anywhere, and do anything, than continue as I was; but then I had no clothes, no friends, no house, no home, no means of doing better. I had made myself what I was. I had made my father and mother turn their backs upon me, and what could I do, but go on? I was as bad off then as I am now, and I couldn't have got work then if I would. I should have spent all I got in drink then, I know. I wrote home twice. I told my mother I was hard up; had neither a shoe to my foot, a coat to my back, nor a roof over my head. I had no answer to my first letter, because it fell into the hands of my

brother, and he tore it up, fearing that my mother might see it. To the second letter that I sent home my mother sent me an answer herself. She sent me a sovereign. She told me that my father was the same as when I first left home, and it was no use my coming back. She sent me the money, bidding me get some clothes and seek for work. I didn't do as she bade. I spent the money—most part in drink. I didn't give any heed whether it was wrong or right. Soon got, soon gone; and I know they could have sent me much more than that if they had pleased. It was last June twelvemonth when I first came to London, and I stopped till the 10th of last March. I lost the young woman when I was put in prison in Manchester. She never came to see me in quod. She cared nothing for me. She only kept company with me to have some one on the road along with her; and I didn't care for her, not I. One half of my time last winter I stopped at the 'Straw-yards,' that is, in the asylums for the houseless poor here and at Glasshouse. When I could get money I had a lodging. After March I started off through Somersetshire. I went to my father's house then. I didn't go in. I saw my father at the door, and he wouldn't let me in. I was a little better dressed than I am now. He said he had enough children at home without me, and gave me 10s. to go. He could not have been kind to me, or else he would not have turned me from his roof. My mother came out to the garden in front of the house, after my father had gone to his work, and spoke to me. She wished me to reform my character. I could not make any rash promises then. I had but very little to say to her. I felt myself at that same time, for the very first time in my life, that I was doing wrong. I thought, if I could hurt my mother so, it must be wrong to go on as I did. I had never had such thoughts before. My father's harsh words always drove such thoughts out of my head; but when I saw my mother's tears, it was more than I could stand. I was wanting to get away as fast as I could from the house. After that I stopped knocking about the country, sleeping in unions, up to November. Then I came to London again, and remained up to this time. Since I have been in town I have sought for work at the floor-cloth and carpet manufactory in the Borough, and they wouldn't even look at me in my present state. I am heartily tired of my life now altogether, and would like to get out of it if I could. I hope at least I have given up my love of drink, and I am sure, if I could once again lay my hand on some work, I should be quite a reformed character. Well, I am altogether tired of carrying on like this. I haven't made 6d. a-day ever since I have been in London this time. I go tramping it across the country just to pass the time, and see a little of new places. When the summer comes I want to

be off. I am sure have seen enough of this country now, and I should like to have a look at some foreign land. Old England has nothing new in it now for me. I think a beggar's life is the worst kind of life that a man can lead. A beggar is no more thought upon than a dog in the street, and there are too many at the trade. I wasn't brought up to a bad life. You can see that by little things—by my handwriting; and, indeed, I should like to have a chance at something else. I have had the feelings of a vagabond for full ten years. I know, and now I am sure, I'm getting a different man. I begin to have thoughts and ideas I never had before. Once I never feared nor cared for anything, and I wouldn't have altered if I could; but now I'm tired out, and if I haven't a chance of going right, why I must go wrong."

The next was a short, thick-set man, with a frequent grin on his countenance, which was rather expressive of humour. He wore a very dirty smock-frock, dirtier trousers, shirt, and neckerchief, and broken shoes. He answered readily, and as if he enjoyed his story.

"I never was at school, and was brought up as a farm labourer at Devizes," he said, "where my parents were labourers. I worked that way three or four years, and then ran away. My master wouldn't give me money enough—only 3s. 6d. a-week,—and my parents were very harsh; so I ran away, rather than be licked for ever. I'd heard people say, 'Go to Bath,' and I went there; and I was only about eleven then. I'm now twenty-three. I tried to get work on the railway there, and I did. I next got into prison for stealing three shovels. I was hard-up, having lost my work, and so I stole them. I was ten weeks in prison. I came out worse than I went in, for I mixed with the old hands, and they put me up to a few capers. When I got out I thought I could live as well that way as by hard work; so I took to the country. I began to beg. At first I took 'No' for an answer, when I asked for 'Charity to a poor boy;' but I found that wouldn't do, so I learned to stick to them. I was forced, or I must have starved, and that wouldn't do at all. I did middling; plenty to eat, and sometimes a drop to drink, but not often. I was forced to be merry, because it's no good being downhearted. I begged for two years,—that is, steal and beg together: I couldn't starve. I did best in country villages in Somersetshire; there's always odds and ends to be picked up there. I got into scrapes now and then. Once, in Devonshire, me and another slept at a farm-house, and in the morning we went egg-hunting. I must have stowed three dozen of eggs about me, when a dog barked, and we were alarmed and ran away, and in getting over a gate I fell, and there I lay among the smashed eggs. I can't help laughing at it still: but I got away. I was too sharp for them. I have been twenty or thirty times in

prison. I have been in for stealing bread, and a side of bacon, and cheese, and shovels, and other things; generally provisions. I generally learn something new in prison. I shall do no good while I stop in England. It's not possible a man like me can get work, so I'm forced to go on this way. Sometimes I haven't a bit to eat all day. At night I may pick up something. An uncle of mine once told me he would like to see me transported, or come to the gallows. I told him I had no fear about the gallows; I should never come to that end: but if I were transported I should be better off than I am now. I can't starve, and I won't; and I can't 'list, I'm too short. I came to London the other day, but could do no good. The London hands are quite a different set to us. We seldom do business together. My way's simple. If I see a thing, and I'm hungry, I take it if I can, in London or anywhere. I once had a turn with two Londoners, and we got two coats and two pair of trousers; but the police got them back again. I was only locked up one night for it. The country's the best place to get away with anything, because there's not so many policemen. There's lots live as I live, because there's no work. I can do a country policeman, generally. I've had sprees at the country lodging-houses—larking, and drinking, and carrying on, and playing cards and dominoes all night for a farthing a game; sometimes fighting about it. I can play at dominoes, but I don't know the cards. They try to cheat one another. Honour among thieves! why there's no such thing; they take from one another. Sometimes we dance all night—Christmas time, and such times. Young women dance with us, and sometimes old women. We're all merry; some's lying on the floor drunk; some's jumping about, smoking; some's dancing; and so we enjoy ourselves. That's the best part of the life. We are seldom stopped in our merry-makings in the country. It's no good the policemen coming among us; give them beer, and you may knock the house down. We have good meat sometimes; sometimes very rough. Some are very particular about their cookery, as nice as anybody is. They must have their pickles, and their peppers, and their fish-sauces (I've had them myself), to their dishes. Chops, in the country, has the call; or ham and eggs—that's relished. Some's very particular about their drink, too; won't touch bad beer; same way with the gin. It's chiefly gin (I'm talking about the country), very little rum; no brandy: but sometimes, after a good day's work, a drop of wine. We help one another when we are sick, where we're knowed. Some's very good that way. Some lodging-house keepers get rid of anybody that's sick, by taking them to the relieving-officer at once."

A really fine-looking lad of eighteen gave me the following statement. He wore a sort of

frock-coat, very thin, buttoned about him, old cloth trousers, and bad shoes. His shirt was tolerably good and clean, and altogether he had a tidy look and an air of quickness, but not of cunning:—

"My father," he said, "was a bricklayer in Shoreditch parish, and my mother took in washing. They did pretty well; but they're dead and buried two years and a half ago. I used to work in brick-fields at Ball's-pond, living with my parents, and taking home every farthing I earned. I earned 18s. a-week, working from five in the morning until sunset. They had only me. I can read and write middling; when my parents died, I had to look out for myself. I was off work, attending to my father and mother when they were sick. They died within about three weeks of each other, and I lost my work, and I had to part with my clothes before that I tried to work in brick-fields, and couldn't get it, and work grew slack. When my parents died I was thirteen; and I sometimes got to sleep in the unions; but that was stopped, and then I took to the lodging-houses, and there I met with lads who were enjoying themselves at push-halfpenny and cards; and they were thieves, and they tempted me to join them, and I did for once—but only once. I then went begging about the streets and thieving, as I knew the others do. I used to pick pockets. I worked for myself, because I thought that would be best. I had no fence at all—no pals at first, nor anything. I worked by myself for a time. I sold the handkerchiefs I got to Jews in the streets, chiefly in Field-lane, for 1s. 6d., but I have got as much as 3s. 6d. for your real fancy ones. One of these buyers wanted to cheat me out of 6d., so I would have no more dealings with him. The others paid me. The 'Kingsmen' they call the best handkerchiefs—those that have the pretty-looking flowers on them. Some are only worth 4d. or 5d., some's not worth taking. Those I gave away to strangers, boys like myself, or wore them myself, round my neck. I only threw one away, but it was all rags, though he looked quite like a gentleman that had it. Lord-mayor's day and such times is the best for us. Last Lord-mayor's day I got four handkerchiefs, and I made 11s. There was a 6d. tied up in the corner of one handkerchief; another was pinned to the pocket, but I got it out, and after that another chap had him, and cut his pocket clean away, but there was nothing in it. I generally picked my men—regular swells, or good-humoured looking men. I've often followed them a mile. I once got a purse with 3s. 6d. in it from a lady when the Coal Exchange was opened. I made 8s. 6d. that day—the purse and handkerchiefs. That's the only lady I ever robbed. I was in the crowd when Manning and his wife were hanged. I wanted to see if they died game, as I heard them talk so much about them at our house. I was there all night. I did four good handkerchiefs and a rotten one not worth picking up. I saw them

hung. I was right under the drop. I was a bit startled when they brought him up and put the rope round his neck and the cap on, and then they brought her out. All said he was hung innocently; it was she that should have been hung by herself. They both dropped together, and I felt faintified, but I soon felt all right again. The police drove us away as soon as it was over, so that I couldn't do any more business; besides, I was knocked down in the crowd and jumped upon, and I won't go to see another hung in a hurry. He didn't deserve it, but she did, every inch of her. I can't say I thought, while I was seeing the execution, that the life I was leading would ever bring me to the gallows. After I'd worked by myself a bit, I got to live in a house where lads like me, big and little, were accommodated. We paid 3d. a-night. It was always full; there was twenty or twenty-one of us. We enjoyed ourselves middling. I was happy enough: we drank sometimes, chiefly beer, and sometimes a drop of gin. One would say, 'I've done so much,' and another, 'I've done so much;' and stand a drop. The best I ever heard done was 2l. for two coats from a tailor's, near Bow-church, Cheapside. That was by one of my pals. We used to share our money with those who did nothing for a day, and they shared with us when we rested. There never was any blabbing. We wouldn't do one another out of a farthing. Of a night some one would now and then read hymns, out of books they sold about the streets—I'm sure they were hymns; or else we'd read stories about Jack Sheppard and Dick Turpin, and all through that set. They were large thick books, borrowed from the library. They told how they used to break open the houses, and get out of Newgate, and how Dick got away to York. We used to think Jack and them very fine fellows. I wished I could be like Jack (I did then), about the blankets in his escape, and that old house in West-street—it is a ruin still. We played cards and dominoes sometimes at our house, and at pushing a halfpenny over the table along five lines. We struck the halfpenny from the edge of the table, and according to what line it settled on was the game—like as they play at the Glass-house—that's the 'model lodging-house' they call it. Cribbage was always played at cards. I can only play cribbage. We have played for a shilling a game, but oftener a penny. It was always fair play. That was the way we passed the time when we were not out. We used to keep quiet, or the police would have been down upon us. They knew of the place. They took one boy there. I wondered what they wanted. The boy caught him at the very door. We lived pretty well; anything we liked to get, when we'd money: we cooked it ourselves. The master of the house was always on the look-out to keep out those who had no business there. No girls were admitted. The master of the house had nothing to do with what we got. I don't know of any other such house in London; I don't

think there are any. The master would sometimes drink with us—a larking like. He used us pretty kindly at times. I have been three times in prison, three months each time; the Compter, Brixton, and Maidstone. I went down to Maidstone fair, and was caught by a London policeman down there. He was dressed as a bricklayer. Prison always made me worse, and as I had nothing given me when I came out, I had to look out again. I generally got hold of something before I had been an hour out of prison. I'm now heartily sick of this life. I wish I'd been transported with some others from Maidstone, where I was tried."

A cotton-spinner (who had subsequently been a soldier), whose appearance was utterly abject, was the next person questioned. He was tall, and had been florid-looking (judging by his present complexion). His coat—very old and worn, and once black—would not button, and would have hardly held together if buttoned. He was out at elbows, and some parts of the collar were pinned together. His waistcoat was of a match with his coat, and his trousers were rags. He had some shirt, as was evident by his waistcoat, held together by one button. A very dirty handkerchief was tied carelessly round his neck. He was tall and erect, and told his adventures with heartiness.

"I am thirty-eight," he said, "and have been a cotton-spinner, working at Chorlton-upon-Medlock. I can neither read nor write. When I was a young man, twenty years ago, I could earn 2l. 10s., clear money, every week, after paying two piecers and a scavenger. Each piecer had 7s. 6d. a-week—they are girls; the scavenger—a boy to clean the wheels of the cotton-spinning machine—had 2s. 6d. I was master of them wheels in the factory. This state of things continued until about the year 1837. I lived well and enjoyed myself, being a hearty man, noways a drunkard, working every day from half-past five in the morning till half-past seven at night—long hours, that time, master. I didn't care about money as long as I was decent and respectable. I had a turn for sporting at the wakes down there. In 1837, the 'self-actors' (machines with steam power) had come into common use. One girl can mind three pairs—that used to be three men's work—getting 15s. for the work which gave three men 7l. 10s. Out of one factory 400 hands were flung in one week, men and women together. We had a meeting of the union, but nothing could be done, and we were told to go and mind the three pairs, as the girls did, for 15s. a-week. We wouldn't do that. Some went for soldiers, some to sea, some to Stoppport (Stockport), to get work in factories where the 'self-actors' wern't agait. The masters there wouldn't have them—at least, some of them. Manchester was full of them; but one gentleman in Hulme still won't have them, for he says he won't turn the men out of bread. I 'listed for a soldier in the 48th. I liked a soldier's life very well

until I got flogged—100 lashes for selling my kit (for a spree), and 150 for striking a corporal, who called me an English robber. He was an Irishman. I was confined five days in the hospital after each punishment. It was terrible. It was like a bunch of razors cutting at your back. Your flesh was dragged off by the cats. Flogging was then very common in the regiment. I was flogged in 1840. To this day I feel a pain in the chest from the triangles. I was discharged from the army about two years ago, when the reduction took place. I was only flogged the times I've told you. I had no pension and no friends. I was discharged in Dublin. I turned to, and looked for work. I couldn't get any, and made my way for Manchester. I stole myself aboard of a steamer, and hid myself till she got out to sea, on her way from Dublin to Liverpool. When the captain found me there, he gave me a kick and some bread, and told me to work, so I worked for my passage twenty-four hours. He put me ashore at Liverpool. I slept in the union that night—nothing to eat and nothing to cover me—no fire; it was winter. I walked to Manchester, but could get nothing to do there, though I was twelve months knocking about. It wants a friend and a character to get work. I slept in unions in Manchester, and had oatmeal porridge for breakfast, work at grinding logwood in the mill, from six to twelve, and then turn out. That was the way I lived chiefly; but I got a job sometimes in driving cattle, and 3d. for it,—or 2d. for carrying baskets in the vegetable markets; and went to Shoedale Union at night. I would get a pint of coffee and half-a-pound of bread, and half-a-pound of bread in the morning, and no work. I took to travelling up to London, half-hungred on the road—that was last winter—eating turnips out of this field, and carrots out of that, and sleeping under hedges and haystacks. I slept under one haystack, and pulled out the hay to cover me, and the snow lay on it a foot deep in the morning. I slept for all that, but wasn't I froze when I woke? An old farmer came up with his cart and pitchfork to load hay. He said: 'Poor fellow! have you been here all night?' I answered, 'Yes.' He gave me some coffee and bread, and one shilling. That was the only good friend I met with on the road. I got fourteen days of it for asking a gentleman for a penny; that was in Stafford. I got to London after that, sleeping in unions sometimes, and begging a bite here and there. Sometimes I had to walk all night. I was once forty-eight hours without a bite, until I got hold at last of a Swede turnip, and so at last I got to London. Here I've tried up and down everywhere for work as a labouring man, or in a foundry. I tried London Docks, and Blackwall, and every place; but no job. At one foundry, the boiler-makers made a collection of 4s. for me. I've walked the streets for three nights together. Here, in

this fine London, I was refused a night's lodging in Shoreditch and in Gray's-inn-lane. A policeman, the fourth night, at twelve o'clock, procured me a lodging, and gave me 2d. I couldn't drag on any longer. I was taken to a doctor's in the city. I fell in the street from hunger and tiredness. The doctor ordered me brandy and water, 2s. 6d., and a quarter loaf, and some coffee, sugar, and butter. He said, what I ailed was hunger. I made that run out as long as I could, but I was then as bad off as ever. It's hard to hunger for nights together. I was once in 'Steel' (Coldbath-fields) for begging. I was in Tothill-fields for going into a chandler's shop, asking for a quarter loaf and half a pound of cheese, and walking out with it. I got a month for that. I have been in Brixton for taking a loaf out of a baker's basket, all through hunger. Better a prison than to starve. I was well treated because I behaved well in prison. I have slept in coaches when I had a chance. One night on a dunghill, covering the stable straw about me to keep myself warm. This place is a relief. I shave the poor people and cut their hair, on a Sunday. I was handy at that when I was a soldier. I have shaved in public-houses for halfpennies. Some landlords kicks me out. Now, in the days, I may pick up a penny or two that way, and get here of a night. I met two Manchester men in Hyde Park on Saturday, skating. They asked me what I was. I said, 'A beggar.' They gave me 2s. 6d., and I spent part of it for warm coffee and other things. They knew all about Manchester, and knew I was a Manchester man by my talk."

The statement I then took was that of a female vagrant—a young girl with eyes and hair of remarkable blackness. Her complexion was of the deepest brunette, her cheeks were full of colour, and her lips very thick. This was accounted for. She told me that her father was a mulatto from Philadelphia. She was short, and dressed in a torn old cotton gown, the pattern of which was hardly discernible from wear. A kind of half-shawl, patched and mended in several places, and of very thin woollen texture, was pinned around her neck; her arms, which, with her hands, were full and large, were bare. She wore very old broken boots and ragged stockings. Her demeanour was modest.

"I am now eighteen," she stated. "My father was a coloured man. He came over here as a sailor, I have heard, but I never saw him; for my mother, who was a white woman, was not married to him, but met him at Oxford; and she married afterwards a box-maker, a white man, and has two other children. They are living, I believe, but I don't know where they are. I have heard my mother say that my father—that's my own father—had become a missionary, and had been sent out to America from England as a

missionary, by Mr. —. I believe that was fifteen years ago. I don't know who Mr. — was, but he was a gentleman, I've heard my mother say. She told me, too, that my father was a good scholar, and that he could speak seven different languages, and was a very religious man. He was sent out to Boston, but I never heard whether he was to stay or not, and I don't know what he was to missionary about. He behaved very well to my mother, I have heard her say, until she took up with the other man (the box-maker), and then he left her, and gave her up, and came to London. It was at Oxford that they all three were then; and when my father got away, or came away to London, my mother followed him (she told me so, but she didn't like to talk about it), as she was then in the family way. She didn't find him; but my father heard of her, and left some money with Mr. — for her, and she got into Poland-street workhouse through Mr. — I've heard. While there, she received 1s. 6d. a-week, but my father never came to see her or me. At one time, my father used to live by teaching languages. He had been in Spain, and France, and Morocco. I've heard, at any rate, that he could speak the Moors' language, but I know nothing more. All this is what I've heard from my mother and my grandmother—that's my mother's mother. My grandfather and grandmother are dead. He was a lawyer. I have a great grandmother living in Oxford, now ninety-two, supported by her parish. I lived with my grandmother at Oxford, who took me out of pity, as my mother never cared about me, when I was four months old. I remained with her until I was ten, and then my mother came from Reading, where she was living, and took me away with her. I lived with her and my stepfather, but they were badly off. He couldn't get much to do at his trade as a box-maker, and he drank a great deal. I was with them about nine months, when I ran away. He beat me so; he never liked me. I couldn't bear it. I went to Pangbourne, but there I was stopped by a man my stepfather had sent—at least I suppose so—and I was forced to walk back to Reading—ten miles, perhaps. My father applied to the overseer for support for me, and the overseer was rather harsh, and my father struck him, and for that he was sent to prison for three months. My mother and her children then got into the workhouse, but not until after my stepfather had been some time in prison. Before that she had an allowance, which was stopped; I don't know how much. I was in the workhouse twenty-one days. I wasn't badly treated. My mother swore my parish, and I was removed to St. James's, Poland-street, London. I was there three weeks, and then I was sent to New Brentford—it was called the Juvenile Establishment—and I went to school. There was about 150 boys and girls; the boys were sent

to Norwood when they were fifteen. Some of the girls were eighteen, kept there until they could get a place. I don't know whether they all belonged to St. James's, or to different parishes, or how. I stayed there about two years. I was very well treated, sufficient to eat; but we worked hard at scrubbing, cleaning, and making shirts. We made all the boys' clothes as well, jackets and trousers, and all. I was then apprenticed a maid-of-all-work, in Duke-street, Grosvenor-square, for three years. I was there two years and a half, when my master failed in business, and had to part with me. They had no servant but me. My mistress was sometimes kind, pretty well. I had to work very hard. She sometimes beat me if I stopped long on my errands. My master beat me once for bringing things wrong from a grocer's. I made a mistake. Once my mistress knocked me down-stairs for being long on an errand to Pimlico, and I'm sure I couldn't help it, and my eye was cut. It was three weeks before I could see well. [There is a slight mark under the girl's eye still.] They beat me with their fists. After I left my master, I tried hard to get a place; I'm sure I did, but I really couldn't; so to live, I got watercresses to sell up and down Oxford-street. I stayed at lodging-houses. I tried that two or three months, but couldn't live. My mother had been 'through the country,' and I knew other people that had, through meeting them at the lodging-houses. I first went to Croydon, begging my way. I slept in the workhouse. After that I went to Brighton, begging my way, but couldn't get much, not enough to pay my lodgings. I was constantly insulted, both in the lodging-houses and in the streets. I sung in the streets at Brighton, and got enough to pay my lodgings, and a little for food. I was there a week, and then I went to the Mendicity, and they gave me a piece of bread (morning and night) and a night's lodging. I then went to Lewes and other places, begging, and got into prison at Tunbridge Wells for fourteen days, for begging. I only used to say I was a poor girl out of place, could they relieve me? I told no lies. I didn't pick my oakum one day, it was such hard stuff; three and a half pounds of it to do from nine to half-past three: so I was put into solitary for three days and three nights, having half a pound of bread and a pint of cold water morning and night; nothing else, and no bed to sleep on. I'm sure I tell you the truth. Some had irons on their hands if they were obstropolous. That's about two months ago. I'm sorry to say that during this time I couldn't be virtuous. I know very well what it means, for I can read and write, but no girl can be so circumstanced as I was. I seldom got money for being wicked; I hated being wicked, but I was tricked and cheated. I am truly sorry for it, but what could a poor girl do? I begged my way from London to Hastings, and got here on Saturday last, and having no money,

came here. I heard of this asylum from a girl in Whitechapel, who had been here. I met her in a lodging-house, where I called to rest in the daytime. They let us rest sometimes in lodging-houses in the daytime. I never was in any prison but Tunbridge Wells, and in Gravesend lock-up for being out after twelve at night, when I had no money to get a lodging. I was there one Saturday night, and got out on Sunday morning, but had nothing given me to eat—I was in by myself. It's a bad place—just straw to sleep on, and very cold. I told you I could read and write. I learnt that partly at Oxford, and finished my learning at the Juvenile Establishment at Brentford. There I was taught, reading, writing, sums, marking, sewing, and scrubbing. Once I could say all the multiplication table, but I've forgot most of it. I know how to make lace, too, because I was taught by a cousin in Oxford, another grandchild of my grandmother's. I can make it with knitting-needles. I could make cushion-lace with pins, but I'm afraid I've forgot how now. I should like, if I could to get into service again, here or abroad. I have heard of Australia, where I have a cousin. I am sure I could and would conduct myself well in service, I have suffered so much out of it. I am sure of it. I never stole anything in my life, and have told all I have done wrong."

STATEMENT OF A RETURNED CONVICT.

I SHALL now give the statement of a man who was selected at random from amongst a number such as himself, congregated in one of the most respectable lodging-houses. He proved, on examination, to be a returned convict, and one who had gone through the severest bodily and mental agony. He had lived in the bush, and been tried for his life. He was an elderly-looking man, whose hair was just turning grey, and in whose appearance there was nothing remarkable, except that his cheek-bones were unusually high, and that his face presented that collected and composed expression which is common to men exposed to habitual watchfulness from constant danger. He gave me the following statement. His dress was bad, but differed in nothing from that of a long-distressed mechanic. He said:—

"I am now 43 (he looked much older), and had respectable parents, and a respectable education. I am a native of London. When I was young I was fond of a roving life, but cared nothing about drink. I liked to see 'life,' as it was called, and was fond of the company of women. Money was no object in those days; it was like picking up dirt in the streets. I ran away from home. My parents were very kind to me; indeed, I think I was used too well, I was petted so, when I was between 12 and 13. I got acquainted with some boys at Bartlemy-fair a little before

that, and saw them spending lots of money and throwing at cock-shies, and such-like; and one of them said, 'Why don't you come out like us?' So afterwards I ran away and joined them. I was not kept shorter of money than other boys like me, but I couldn't settle. I couldn't fix my mind to any regular business but a waterman's, and my friends wouldn't hear of that. There was nine boys of us among the lot that I joined, but we didn't all work together. All of 'em came to be sent to Van Dieman's Land as transports except one, and he was sent to Sydney. While we were in London it was a merry life, with change of scene, for we travelled about. We were successful in nearly all our plans for several months. I worked in Fleet Street, and could make 3*l.* a-week at handkerchiefs alone, sometimes falling across a pocket-book. The best handkerchiefs then brought 4*s.* in Field-lane. Our chief enjoyments were at the 'Free and Easy,' where all the thieves and young women went, and sang and danced. I had a young woman for a partner then; she went out to Van Dieman's Land. She went on the lift in London (shopping and stealing from the counter). She was clever at it. I carried on in this way for about 15 months, when I was grabbed for an attempt on a gentleman's pocket by St. Paul's Cathedral, on a grand charity procession day. I had two months in the Old Horse (Bridewell). I never thought of my parents at this time—I wouldn't. I was two years and a half at this same trade. One week was very like another,—successes and escapes, and free-and-easies, and games of all sorts, made up the life. At the end of the two years and a half I got into the way of forged Bank-of-England notes. A man I knew in the course of business, said, 'I would cut that game of 'smatter-hauling,' (stealing handkerchiefs), and do a little soft,' (pass bad notes). So I did, and was very successful at first. I had a mate. He afterwards went out to Sydney, too, for 14 years. I went stylishly dressed as a gentleman, with a watch in my pocket, to pass my notes. I passed a good many in drapers' shops, also at tailors' shops. I never tried jewellers, they're reckoned too good judges. The notes were all finnies, (5*l.* notes), and a good imitation. I made more money at this game, but lived as before, and had my partner still. I was fond of her; she was a nice girl, and I never found that she wronged me in any way. I thought at four months' end of retiring into the country with gambling-tables, as the risk was becoming considerable. They hung them for it in them days, but that never daunted me the least in life. I saw Cashman hung for that gunsmith's shop on Snow-hill, and I saw Fauntleroy hung, and a good many others, but it gave me no uneasiness and no fear. The gallows had no terror for people in my way of life. I started into the country with another man and his wife—his lawful wife—

for I had a few words with my own young woman, or I shouldn't have left her behind me, or, indeed, have started at all. We carried gambling on in different parts of the country for six months. We made most at the E. O. tables,—not those played with a ball, they weren't in vogue then, but throwing dice for prizes marked on a table. The highest prize was ten guineas, but the dice were so made that no prize could be thrown; the numbers were not regular as in good dice, and they were loaded as well. If anybody asked to see them, we had good dice ready to show. All sorts played with us. London men and all were taken in. We made most at the races. My mate and his wife told me that at the last Newmarket meeting we attended, 65*l.* was made, but they rowed in the same boat. I know they got a deal more. The 65*l.* was shared in three equal portions, but I had to maintain the horse and cart out of my own share. We used to go out into the roads (highway robbery) between races, and if we met an 'old bloke' (man) we 'propped him' (knocked him down), and robbed him. We did good stakes that way, and were never found out. We lived as well as any gentleman in the land. Our E. O. table was in a tilted cart. I stayed with this man and his wife two months. She was good-looking, so as to attract people. I thought they didn't use me altogether right, so at Braintree I gave another man in the same way of business 25*l.* for his kit—horse, harness, tilted-cart, and table. I gave him two good 5*l.* notes and three bad ones, for I worked that way still, not throwing much of a chance away. I came to London for a hawker's stock, braces and such-like, to sell on the road, just to take the down off (remove suspicion). In the meantime, the man that I bought the horse, &c., of, had been nailed passing a bad note, and he stated who he got it from, and I was traced. He was in a terrible rage to find himself done, particularly as he used to do the same to other people himself. He got acquitted for that there note after he had me 'pinched' (arrested). I got 'fullied' (fully committed). I was tried at the 'Start' (Old Bailey), and pleaded guilty to the minor offence, (that of utterance, not knowing the note to be forged), or I should have been hanged for it then. It was a favourable sessions when I was tried. Thirty-six were cast for death, and only one was 'topped' (hanged), the very one that expected to be 'turned up' (acquitted) for highway robbery. I was sentenced to 14 years' transportation. I was ten weeks in the Bellerophon hulk at Sheerness, and was then taken to Hobart Town, Van Dieman's Land, in the Sir Godfrey Webster. At Hobart Town sixty of us were picked out to go to Launceston. There (at Launceston) we lay for four days in an old church, guarded by constables; and then the settlers came there from all parts, and picked their men out. I

got a very bad master. He put me to harvest work that I had never even seen done before, and I had the care of pigs as wild as wild boars. After that I was sent to Launceston with two letters from my master to the superintendent, and the other servants thought I had luck to get away from Red Barks to Launceston, which was 16 miles off. I then worked in a Government potato-field; in the Government charcoal-works for about 11 months; and then was in the Marine department, going by water from Launceston to George Town, taking Government officers down in gigs, provisions in boats, and such-like. There was a crew of six (convicts) in the gigs, and four in the watering-boats. All the time I consider I was very hardly treated. I hadn't clothes half the time, being allowed only two slop-suits in a year, and no bed to lie on when we had to stay out all night with the boats by the river Tamar. With 12 years' service at this my time was up, but I had incurred several punishments before it was up. The first was 25 lashes, because a bag of flour had been burst, and I picked up a capfull. The flogging is dreadfully severe, a soldier's is nothing to it. I once had 50 lashes, for taking a hat in a joke when I was tipsy; and a soldier had 300 the same morning. I was flogged as a convict, and he as a soldier; and when we were both at the same hospital after the flogging, and saw each other's backs, the other convicts said to me, 'D— it, you've got it this time;' and the soldier said, when he saw my back, 'You've got it twice as bad I have.' 'No,' said the doctor, 'ten times as bad—he's been flogged; but you, in comparison, have only had a child's whipping.' The cats the convicts were then flogged with were each six feet long, made out of the log-line of a ship of 500 tons burden; nine over-end knots were in each tail, and nine tails whipped at each end with wax-end. With this we had half-minute lashes; a quick lashing would have been certain death. One convict who had 75 lashes was taken from the triangles to the watch-house in Launceston, and was asked if he would have some tea,—he was found to be dead. The military surgeon kept on saying in this case, 'Go on, do your duty.' I was mustered there, as was every hand belonging to the Government, and saw it, and heard the doctor. When I was first flogged, there was inquiry among my fellow-convicts, as to 'How did D— (meaning me) stand it—did he sing?' The answer was, 'He was a pebble;' that is, I never once said, 'Oh!' or gave out any expression of the pain I suffered. I took my flogging like a stone. If I had sung, some of the convicts would have given me some lush with a locust in it (laudanum hoccusing), and when I was asleep would have given me a crack on the head that would have laid me straight. That first flogging made me ripe. I said to myself, 'I can take it like a bullock.' I could have taken the flogger's life

at the time, I felt such revenge. Flogging always gives that feeling; I know it does, from what I've heard others say who had been flogged like myself. In all I had 875 lashes at my different punishments. I used to boast of it at last. I would say, 'I don't care, I can take it till they see my backbone.' After a flogging, I've rubbed my back against a wall, just to show my bravery like, and squeezed the congealed blood out of it. Once I would not let them dress my back after a flogging, and I had 25 additional for that. At last I bolted to Hobart Town, 120 miles off. There I was taken before Mr. H——, the magistrate, himself a convict formerly, I believe from the Irish Rebellion; but he was a good man to a prisoner. He ordered me 50, and sent me back to Launceston. At Launceston I was 'fuddled' by a bench of magistrates, and had 100. Seven years before my time was up I took to the bush. I could stand it no longer, of course not. In the bush I met men with whom, if I had been seen associating, I should have been hanged on any slight charge, such as Brittan was and his pals."

I am not at liberty to continue this man's statement at present: it would be a breach of the trust reposed in me. Suffice it, he was in after days tried for his life. Altogether it was a most extraordinary statement; and, from confirmations I received, was altogether truthful. He declared that he was so sick of the life he was now leading, that he would, as a probation, work on any kind of land anywhere for nothing, just to get out of it. He pronounced the lodging-houses the grand encouragements and concealments of crime, though he might be speaking against himself, he said, as he had always hidden safely there during the hottest search. A policeman once walked through the ward in search of him, and he was in bed. He knew the policeman well, and was as well known to the officer, but he was not recognised. He attributed his escape to the thick, bad atmosphere of the place giving his features a different look, and to his having shaved off his whiskers, and pulled his nightcap over his head. The officer, too, seemed half-sick, he said.

It ought also to be added, that this man stated that the severity of the Government in this penal colony was so extreme, that men thought little of giving others a knock on the head with an axe, to get hanged out of the way. Under the discipline of Captain Macconochie, however, who introduced better order with a kindlier system, there wasn't a man but what would have laid down his life for him.

LIVES OF THE BOY INMATES OF THE CASUAL WARDS OF THE LONDON WORKHOUSES.

An intelligent-looking boy, of sixteen years of age, whose dress was a series of ragged coats, three in number—as if one was to obviate the

deficiency of another, since one would not button, and another was almost sleeveless—gave me the following statement. He had long and rather fair hair, and spoke quietly. He said:—

"I'm a native of Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire, and am sixteen. My father was a shoemaker, and my mother died when I was five years old, and my father married again. I was sent to school, and can read and write well. My father and step-mother were kind enough to me. I was apprenticed to a tailor three years ago, but I wasn't long with him; I runned away. I think it was three months I was with him when I first runned away. It was in August—I got as far as Boston in Lincolnshire, and was away a fortnight. I had 4s. 6d. of my own money when I started, and that lasted two or three days. I stopped in lodging-houses until my money was gone, and then I slept anywhere—under the hedges, or anywhere. I didn't see so much of life then, but I've seen plenty of it since. I had to beg my way back from Boston, but was very awkward at first. I lived on turnips mainly. My reason for running off was because my master ill-used me so; he beat me, and kept me from my meals, and made me sit up working late at nights for a punishment: but it was more to his good than to punish me. I hated to be confined to a tailor's shopboard, but I would rather do that sort of work now than hunger about like this. But you see, sir, God punishes you when you don't think of it. When I went back my father was glad to see me, and he wouldn't have me go back again to my master, and my indentures were cancelled. I stayed at home seven months, doing odd jobs, in driving sheep, or any country work, but I always wanted to be off to sea. I liked the thoughts of going to sea far better than tailoring. I determined to go to sea if I could. When a dog's determined to have a bone, it's not easy to hinder him. I didn't read stories about the sea then, not even 'Robinson Crusoe,'—indeed I haven't read that still, but I know very well there is such a book. My father had no books but religious books; they were all of a religious turn, and what people might think dull, but they never made me dull. I read Wesley's and Watts's hymns, and religious magazines of different connexions. I had a natural inclination for the sea, and would like to get to it now. I've read a good deal about it since—Clark's 'Lives of Pirates,' 'Tales of Shipwrecks,' and other things in penny numbers (Clark's I got out of a library though). I was what people called a deep boy for a book; and am still. Whenever I had a penny, after I got a bellyful of victuals, it went for a book, but I haven't bought many lately. I did buy one yesterday—the 'Family Herald'—one I often read when I can get it. There's good reading in it; it elevates your mind—anybody that has a mind for studying. It has good tales in it. I never

read 'Jack Sheppard,'—that is, I haven't read the big book that's written about him; but I've often heard the boys and men talk about it at the lodging-houses and other places. When they haven't their bellies and money to think about they sometimes talk about books; but for such books as them—that's as 'Jack'—I haven't a partiality. I've read 'Windsor Castle,' and 'The Tower,'—they're by the same man. I liked 'Windsor Castle,' and all about Henry VIII. and Herne the hunter. It's a book that's connected with history, and that's a good thing in it. I like adventurous tales. I know very little about theatres, as I was never in one.

"Well, after that seven months—I was kindly treated all the time—I runned away again to get to sea; and hearing so much talk about this big London, I comed to it. I couldn't settle down to anything but the sea. I often watched the ships at Wisbeach. I had no particular motive, but a sort of pleasure in it. I was aboard some ships, too; just looking about, as lads will. I started without a farthing, but I couldn't help it. I felt I must come. I forgot all I suffered before—at least, the impression had died off my mind. I came up by the unions when they would take me in. When I started, I didn't know where to sleep any more than the dead; I learned it from other travellers on the road. It was two winters ago, and very cold weather. Sometimes I slept in barns, and I begged my way as well as I could. I never stole anything then or since, except turnips; but I've been often tempted. At last I got to London, and was by myself. I travelled sometimes with others as I came up, but not as mates—not as friends. I came to London for one purpose just by myself. I was a week in London before I knew where I was. I didn't know where to go. I slept on door-steps, or anywhere. I used often to stand on London-bridge, but I didn't know where to go to get to sea, or anything of that kind. I was sadly hungered, regularly starved; and I saw so many policemen, I durstn't beg—and I dare not now, in London. I got crusts, but I can hardly tell how I lived. One night I was sleeping under a railway-arch, somewhere about Bishopsgate-street, and a policeman came and asked me what I was up to? I told him I had no place to go to, so he said I must go along with him. In the morning he took me and four or five others to a house in a big street. I don't know where; and a man—a magistrate, I suppose he was—heard what the policeman had to say, and he said there was always a lot of lads there about the arches, young thieves, that gave him a great deal of trouble, and I was one associated with them. I declare I didn't know any of the other boys, nor any boys in London—not a soul; and I was under the arch by myself, and only that night. I never saw the policeman himself before that, as I know of. I got fourteen days of it, and they took me in an omnibus,

but I don't know to what prison. I was committed for being a rogue and something else. I didn't very well hear what other things I was, but 'rogue' I know was one. They were very strict in prison, and I wasn't allowed to speak. I was put to oakum some days, and others on a wheel. That's the only time I was ever in prison, and I hope it will always be the only time. Something may turn up—there's nobody knows. When I was turned out I hadn't a farthing given to me. And so I was again in the streets, without knowing a creature, and without a farthing in my pocket, and nothing to get one with but my tongue. I set off that day for the country. I didn't try to get a ship, because I didn't know where to go to ask, and I had got ragged, and they wouldn't hear me out if I asked any people about the bridges. I took the first road that offered, and got to Greenwich. I couldn't still think of going back home. I would if I had had clothes, but they were rags, and I had no shoes but a pair of old slippers. I was sometimes sorry I left home, but then I began to get used to travelling, and to beg a bit in the villages. I had no regular mate to travel with, and no sweetheart. I slept in the unions whenever I could get in—that's in the country. I didn't never sleep in the London workhouses till afterwards. In some country places there were as many as forty in the casual wards, men, women, and children; in some, only two or three. There used to be part boys, like myself, but far more bigger than I was; they were generally from eighteen to twenty-three: London chaps, chiefly, I believe. They were a regularly jolly set. They used to sing and dance a part of the nights and mornings in the wards, and I got to sing and dance with them. We were all in a mess; there was no better or no worse among us. We used to sing comic and sentimental songs, both. I used to sing 'Tom Elliott,' that's a sea song, for I hankered about the sea, and 'I'm Afloat.' I hardly know any but sea-songs. Many used to sing indecent songs; they're impudent blackguards. They used to sell these songs among the others, but I never sold any of them, and I never had any, though I know some, from hearing them often. We told stories sometimes; romantic tales, some; others blackguard kind of tales, about bad women; and others about thieving and roguery; not so much about what they'd done themselves, as about some big thief that was very clever at stealing, and could trick anybody. Not stories such as Dick Turpin or Jack Sheppard, or things that's in history, but inventions. I used to say when I was telling a story—for I've told one story that I invented till I learnt it,—

[I give this story to show what are the objects of admiration with these vagrants.]

"You see, mates, there was once upon a time, and a very good time it was, a young man, and he runned away, and got along with

a gang of thieves, and he went to a gentleman's house, and got in, because one of his mates sweethearted the servant, and got her away, and she left the door open. ["But don't," he expostulated, "take it all down that way; it's foolishness. I'm ashamed of it—it's just what we say to amuse ourselves."] And the door being left open, the young man got in and robbed the house of a lot of money, 1000*l.*, and he took it to their gang at the cave. Next day there was a reward out to find the robber. Nobody found him. So the gentleman put out two men and a horse in a field, and the men were hidden in the field, and the gentleman put out a notice that anybody that could catch the horse should have him for his cleverness, and a reward as well; for he thought the man that got the 1000*l.* was sure to try to catch that there horse, because he was so bold and clever, and then the two men hid would nab him. This here Jack (that's the young man) was watching, and he saw the two men, and he went and caught two live hares. Then he hid himself behind a hedge, and let one hare go, and one man said to the other, 'There goes a hare,' and they both run after it, not thinking Jack's there. And while they were running he let go the t'other one, and they said, 'There's another hare,' and they ran different ways, and so Jack went and got the horse, and took it to the man that offered the reward, and got the reward; it was 100*l.*; and the gentleman said 'D——n it, Jack's done me this time.' The gentleman then wanted to serve out the parson, and he said to Jack, 'I'll give you another 100*l.* if you'll do something to the parson as bad as you've done to me.' Jack said, 'Well, I will;' and Jack went to the church and lighted up the lamps, and rang the bells, and the parson he got up to see what was up. Jack was standing in one of the pews like an angel, when the parson got to the church. Jack said, 'Go and put your plate in a bag; I'm an angel come to take you up to heaven.' And the parson did so, and it was as much as he could drag to church from his house in a bag; for he was very rich. And when he got to the church Jack put the parson in one bag, and the money stayed in the other; and he tied them both together, and put them across his horse, and took them up hills and through water to the gentleman's, and then he took the parson out of the bag, and the parson was wringing wet. Jack fetched the gentleman, and the gentleman gave the parson a horsewhipping, and the parson cut away, and Jack got all the parson's money and the second 100*l.*, and gave it all to the poor. And the parson brought an action against the gentleman for horsewhipping him, and they both were ruined. That's the end of it.' That's the sort of story that's liked best, sir. Sometimes there was fighting in the casual-wards. Sometimes I was in it, I was like the rest. We jawed each other often, calling names and coming to fight at last. At

Romsey a lot of young fellows broke all the windows they could get at, because they were too late to be admitted. They broke them from the outside. We couldn't get at them from inside. I've carried on begging, and going from union to union to sleep, until now. Once I got work in Northampton with a drover. I kept working when he'd a job, from August last to the week before Christmas. I always tried to get a ship in a seaport, but couldn't. I've been to Portsmouth, Plymouth, Bristol, Southampton, Ipswich, Liverpool, Brighton, Dover, Shoreham, Hastings, and all through Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Cambridge-shire, and Suffolk—not in Norfolk—they won't let you go there. I don't know why. All this time I used to meet boys like myself, but mostly bigger and older; plenty of them could read and write, some were gentlemen's sons, they said. Some had their young women with them that they'd taken up with, but I never was much with them. I often wished I was at home again, and do now, but I can't think of going back in these rags; and I don't know if my father's dead or alive (his voice trembled), but I'd like to be there and have it over. I can't face meeting them in these rags, and I've seldom had better, I make so little money. I'm unhappy at times, but I get over it better than I used, as I get accustomed to this life. I never heard anything about home since I left. I have applied at the Marine Society here, but it's no use. If I could only get to sea, I'd be happy; and I'd be happy if I could get home, and would, but for the reasons I've told you."

The next was a boy with a quiet look, rather better dressed than most of the vagrant boys, and far more clean in his dress. He made the following statement:—

"I am now seventeen. My father was a cotton-spinner in Manchester, but has been dead ten years; and soon after that my mother went into the workhouse, leaving me with an aunt; and I had work in a cotton factory. As young as I was, I earned 2*s.* 2*d.* a-week at first. I can read well, and can write a little. I worked at the factory two years, and was then earning 7*s.* a-week. I then ran away, for I had always a roving mind; but I should have stayed if my master hadn't knocked me about so. I thought I should make my fortune in London—I'd heard it was such a grand place. I had read in novels and romances,—halfpenny and penny books,—about such things, but I've met with nothing of the kind. I started without money, and begged my way from Manchester to London, saying I was going up to look for work. I wanted to see the place more than anything else. I suffered very much on the road, having to be out all night often; and the nights were cold, though it was summer. When I got to London all my hopes were blighted. I could get no further. I never tried for work in London, for I believe there are no cotton factories in it; besides, I wanted

to see life. I begged, and slept in the unions. I got acquainted with plenty of boys like myself. We met at the casual wards, both in London and the country. I have now been five years at this life. We were merry enough in the wards, we boys, singing and telling stories. Songs such as 'Paul Jones' was liked, while some sung very blackguard songs; but I never got hold of such songs, though I have sold lots of songs in Essex. Some told long stories, very interesting; some were not fit to be heard; but they made one laugh sometimes. I've read 'Jack Sheppard' through, in three volumes; and I used to tell stories out of that sometimes. We all told in our turns. We generally began,—'Once upon a time, and a very good time it was, though it was neither in your time, nor my time, nor nobody else's time.' The best man in the story is always called Jack."

At my request, this youth told me a long story, and told it very readily, as if by rote. I give it for its peculiarity, as it is extravagant enough, without humour.

"A farmer hired Jack, and instructed him over-night. Jack was to do what he was required, or lose his head. 'Now, Jack,' said the farmer, [I give the conclusion in the boy's words,] 'what's my name?' 'Master, to be sure,' says Jack. 'No,' said he, 'you must call me Tom Per Cent.' He showed his bed next, and asked, 'What's this, Jack?' 'Why, the bed,' said Jack. 'No, you must call that, He's of Degree.' And so he bid Jack call his leather breeches 'forty cracks;' the cat, 'white-faced Simeon;' the fire, 'hot coleman;' the pump, the 'resurrection;' and the haystack, the 'little cock-a-mountain.' Jack was to remember these names or lose his head. At night the cat got under the grate, and burned herself, and a hot cinder struck her fur, and she ran under the haystack and set it on fire. Jack ran up-stairs to his master, and said:—

'Tom Per Cent, arise out of he's of degree,
Put on your forty cracks, come down and see;
For the little white-faced Simeon
Has run away with hot coleman
Under the little cock-a-mountain,
And without the aid of the resurrection
We shall be damned and burnt to death.'

So Jack remembered his lesson, and saved his head. That's the end. Blackguard stories were often told about women. There was plenty told, too, about Dick Turpin, Sixteen-string Jack, Oxford Blue, and such as them; as well as about Jack Sheppard; about Bamfylde Moore Carew, too, and his disguises. We very often had fighting and quarrelling among ourselves. Once, at Birmingham, we smashed all the windows, and did all the damage we could. I can't tell exactly why it was done, but we must all take part in it, or we should be marked. I believe some did it to get into prison, they were so badly off. They piled up the rugs; there was no straw;

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and some put their clothes on the rugs, and then the heap was set fire to. There was no fire, and no light, but somebody had a box of lucifers. We were all nearly suffocated before the people of the place could get to us. Seventeen of us had a month a-piece for it: I was one. The rugs were dirty and filthy, and not fit for any Christian to sleep under, and so I took part in the burning, as I thought it would cause something better. I've known wild Irishmen get into the wards with knives and sticks hidden about their persons, to be ready for a fight. I met two young men in Essex who had been well off—very well,—but they liked a tramper's life. Each had his young woman with him, living as man and wife. They often change their young women; but I never did travel with one, or keep company with any more than twelve hours or so. There used to be great numbers of girls in the casual wards in London. Any young man travelling the country could get a mate among them, and can get mates—partners they're often called,—still. Some of them are very pretty indeed; but among them are some horrid ugly—the most are ugly; bad expressions and coarse faces, and lame, and disgusting to the eye. It was disgusting, too, to hear them in their own company; that is, among such as themselves;—beggars, you know. Almost every word was an oath, and every blackguard word was said plain out. I think the pretty ones were worst. Very few have children. I knew two who had. One was seventeen, and her child was nine months old; the other was twenty-one, and her child was eighteen months. They were very good to their children. I've heard of some having children, and saying they couldn't guess at the fathers of them, but I never met with any such myself. I didn't often hear them quarrel,—I mean the young men and young women that went out as partners,—in the lodging-houses. Some boys of fifteen have their young women as partners, but with young boys older women are generally partners—women about twenty. They always pass as man and wife. All beggar-girls are bad, I believe. I never heard but of one that was considered virtuous, and she was always reading a prayer-book and a testament in her lodging-house. The last time I saw her was at Cambridge. She is about thirty, and has traces of beauty left. The boys used to laugh at her, and say, 'Oh! how virtuous and righteous we are! but you get your living by it.' I never knew her to get anything by it. I don't see how she could, for she said nothing about her being righteous when she was begging about, I believe. If it wasn't for the casual wards, I couldn't get about. If two partners goes to the same union, they have to be parted at night, and join again the morning. Some of the young women are very dirty, but some's as clean. A few, I think, can read and write. Some boasts of their wickedness, and others tell them in

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derision it's wrong to do that, and then a quarrel rages in the lodging-house. I liked a roving life, at first, being my own master. I was fond of going to plays, and such-like, when I got money; but now I'm getting tired of it, and wish for something else. I have tried for work at cotton factories in Lancashire and Yorkshire, but never could get any. I've been all over the country. I'm sure I could settle now. I couldn't have done that two years ago, the roving spirit was so strong upon me, and the company I kept got a strong hold on me. Two winters back, there was a regular gang of us boys in London. After sleeping at a union, we would fix where to meet at night to get into another union to sleep. There were thirty of us that way, all boys; besides forty young men, and thirty young women. Sometimes we walked the streets all night. We didn't rob, at least I never saw any robbing. We had pleasure in chaffing the policemen, and some of us got taken up. I always escaped. We got broken up in time, —some's dead, some's gone to sea, some into the country, some home, and some lagged. Among them were many lads very expert in reading, writing, and arithmetic. One young man—he was only twenty-five,—could speak several languages; he had been to sea. He was then begging, though a strong young man. I suppose he liked that life: some soon got tired of it. I often have suffered from cold and hunger. I never made more than 3d. a-day in money, take the year round, by begging; some make more than 6d.: but then, I've had meat and bread given besides. I say nothing when I beg, but that I am a poor boy out of work and starving. I never stole anything in my life. I've often been asked to do so by my mates. I never would. The young women steal the most. I know, at least, I did know, two that kept young men, their partners, going about the country with them, chiefly by their stealing. Some do so by their prostitution. Those that go as partners are all prostitutes. There is a great deal of sickness among the young men and women, but I never was ill these last seven years. Fevers, colds, and venereal diseases, are very common."

The last statement I took was that of a boy of thirteen. I can hardly say that he was clothed at all. He had no shirt, and no waistcoat; all his neck and a great part of his chest being bare. A ragged cloth jacket hung about him, and was tied, so as to keep it together, with bits of tape. What he had wrapped round for trousers did not cover one of his legs, while one of his thighs was bare. He wore two old shoes; one tied to his foot with an old ribbon, the other a woman's old boot. He had an old cloth cap. His features were distorted somewhat, through being swollen with the cold. "I was born," he said, "at a place called Hadley, in Kent. My father died when I was three days old, I've heard my mo-

ther say. He was married to her, I believe, but I don't know what he was. She had only me. My mother went about begging, sometimes taking me with her; at other times she left me at the lodging-house in Hadley. She went in the country, round about Tunbridge and there, begging. Sometimes she had a day's work. We had plenty to eat then, but I haven't had much lately. My mother died at Hadley a year ago. I didn't know how she was buried. She was ill a long time, and I was out begging; for she sent me out to beg for myself a good while before that, and when I got back to the lodging-house they told me she was dead. I had sixpence in my pocket, but I couldn't help crying to think I'd lost my mother. I cry about it still. I didn't wait to see her buried, but I started on my own account. I met two navvies in Bromley, and they paid my first night's lodging; and there was a man passing, going to London with potatoes, and the navvies gave the man a pot of beer to take me up to London in the van, and they went that way with me. I came to London to beg, thinking I could get more there than anywhere else, hearing that London was such a good place. I begged; but sometimes wouldn't get a farthing in a day; often walking about the streets all night. I have been begging about all the time till now. I am very weak—starving to death. I never stole anything: I always kept my hands to myself. A boy wanted me to go with him to pick a gentleman's pocket. We was mates for two days, and then he asked me to go picking pockets; but I wouldn't. I know it's wrong, though I can neither read nor write. The boy asked me to do it to get into prison, as that would be better than the streets. He picked pockets to get into prison. He was starving about the streets like me. I never slept in a bed since I've been in London: I am sure I haven't: I generally slept under the dry arches in West-street, where they're building houses—I mean the arches for the cellars. I begged chiefly from the Jews about Petticoat-lane, for they all give away bread that their children leave—pieces of crust, and such-like. I would do anything to be out of this misery."

INCREASE AND DECREASE OF NUMBER OF APPLICANTS TO CASUAL WARDS OF LONDON WORKHOUSES.

THE vagrant applying for shelter is admitted at all times of the day and night. He applies at the gate, he has his name entered in the vagrant book, and he is then supplied with six ounces of bread and one ounce of cheese. As the admission generally takes place in the evening, no work is required of them until the following morning. At one time every vagrant was searched and bathed, but in the cold season of the year the bathing is discontinued; neither are they searched unless there are grounds for suspecting that they have property

secreted upon them. The males are conducted to the ward allotted to them, and the females to their ward. These wards consist each of a large chamber, in which are arranged two large guard-beds, or inclined boards, similar to those used in soldiers' guard-rooms; between these there is a passage from one end of the chamber to the other. The boards are strewn with straw, so that, on entering the place in the day-time, it has the appearance of a well-kept stable. All persons are supplied with two, and in the cold season with three, rugs to cover them. These rugs are daily placed in a fumigating oven, so as to decompose all infectious matter. Formerly beds were supplied in place of the straw, but the habitual vagrants used to amuse themselves with cutting up the mattresses, and strewing the flock all over the place; the blankets and rugs they tore into shreds, and wound them round their legs, under their trousers. The windows of the casual ward are protected on the inside with a strong guard, similar to those seen in the neighbourhood of racket-grounds. No lights are allowed in the casual ward, so that they are expected to retire to rest immediately on their entrance, and this they invariably are glad to do. In the morning they are let out at eight in the winter, and seven in the summer. And then another six ounces of bread and one ounce of cheese is given to them, and they are discharged. In return for this, three hours' labour at the hand-corn-mill was formerly exacted; but now the numbers are so few, and the out-door paupers so numerous, and so different from the class of vagrants, that the latter are allowed to go on their road immediately the doors of the casual ward are opened. The labour formerly exacted was not in any way remunerative. In the three hours that they were at work, it is supposed that the value of each man's labour could not be expressed in any coin of the realm. The work was demanded as a test of destitution and industry, and not as a matter of compensation. If the vagrants were very young, they were put to oakum-picking instead of the hand-mill. The women were very rarely employed at any time, because there was no suitable place in the union for them to pick oakum, and the master was unwilling to allow them, on account of their bad and immoral characters, as well as their filthy habits, to communicate with the other inmates. The female vagrants generally consist of prostitutes of the lowest and most miserable kind. They are mostly young girls, who have sunk into a state of dirt, disease, and almost nudity. There are few of them above twenty years of age, and they appear to have commenced their career of vice frequently as early as ten or twelve years old. They mostly are found in the company of mere boys.

The above descriptions apply rather to the state of the vagrants some two or three years back, than to things as they exist at present. In the year 1837, a correspondence took place

between the Commissioners of Police and the Commissioners of the Poor-law, in which the latter declare that "if a person state that he has no food, and that he is destitute, or otherwise express or signify that he is in danger of perishing unless relief be given to him, then any officer charged with the administration of relief is bound, unless he have presented to him some reasonable evidence to rebut such statement, to give relief to such destitute person in the mode prescribed by law." The Poor-law Commissioners further declare in the same document, that they will feel it their duty to make the officers responsible in their situations for any serious neglect to give prompt and adequate relief in any case of real destitution and emergency. The consequence of this declaration was, that Poor-law officers appeared to feel themselves bound to admit all vagrants upon their mere statement of destitution, whereas before that time parties were admitted into the casual wards either by tickets from the ratepayers, or else according to the discretion of the master. Whether or not the masters imagined that they were compelled to admit every applicant from that period my informant cannot say, but it is certain that after the date of that letter vagrancy began to increase throughout the country; at first gradually, but after a few years with a most enormous rapidity; so that in 1848, it appeared from the Poor-law Report on Vagrancy (presented to both Houses of Parliament in that year) that the number of vagrants had increased to upwards of 16,000. The rate of increase for the three years previous to that period is exhibited in the following table:—

I.—Summary of the Number of Vagrants in Unions and Places under Local Acts, in England and Wales, at different periods, as appears from the Returns which follow:—	
Average number relieved in one night in 603 Unions, &c., in the week ending 20th December, 1845.....	1,791
Average number relieved in one night in 603 Unions, &c., in the week ending 19th December, 1846.....	2,224
Average number relieved in one night in 596 Unions, &c., in the week ending 18th December, 1847.....	4,508
Total number relieved, whether in or out of the workhouse in 626 Unions, &c., on the 25th March, 1848.....	16,086

Matters had reached this crisis, when the late Mr. C. Buller, President of the Poor-law Board, issued, in August 1848, a minute, in which—after stating that the Board had received representations from every part of England and Wales respecting the continual and rapid increase of vagrancy—he gives the following instructions to the officers employed in the administration of the Poor-law:—

"With respect to the applicants that will thus come before him, the relieving officer will have to exercise his judgment as to the truth of their assertions of destitution, and to ascertain by searching them whether they possess any means of supplying their own necessities. He will not be likely to err in judging from their appearance whether they are suffering from want of food. He will take care that women and children, the old and infirm, and those who, without absolutely serious disease, present an enfeebled or sickly appearance, are supplied with necessary food and shelter. As a general rule, he would be right in refusing relief to able-bodied and healthy men; though in inclement weather he might afford them shelter, if really destitute of the means of procuring it for themselves. His duties would necessarily make him acquainted with the persons of the habitual vagrants; and to these it would be his duty to refuse relief, except in case of evident and urgent necessity.

"It was found necessary by the late Poor-law Commissioners at one time to remind the various unions and their officers of the responsibility which would be incurred by refusing relief where it was required. The present state of things renders it necessary that this Board should now impress on them the grievous mischiefs that must arise, and the responsibilities that may be incurred, by a too ready distribution of relief to tramps and vagrants not entitled to it. Boards of guardians and their officers may, in their attempts to restore a more wise and just system, be subjected to some obloquy from prejudices that confound poverty with profligacy. They will, however, be supported by the consciousness of discharging their duty to those whose funds they have to administer, as well as to the deserving poor, and of resisting the extension of a most pernicious and formidable abuse. They may confidently reckon on the support of public opinion, which the present state of things has aroused and enlightened; and those who are responsible to the Poor-law Board may feel assured that, while no instance of neglect or hardship to the poor will be tolerated, they may look to the Board for a candid construction of their acts and motives, and for a hearty and steadfast support of those who shall exert themselves to guard from the grasp of imposture that fund which should be sacred to the necessities of the poor."

Thus authorised and instructed to exercise their own discretion, rather than trust to the mere statements of the vagrants themselves, the officers immediately proceeded to act upon the suggestions given in the minute above quoted, and the consequence was, that the number of vagrants diminished more rapidly even than they had increased throughout the country. In the case of one union alone—the Wandsworth and Clapham—the following returns will show both how vagrancy was fos-

tered under the one system, and how it has declined under the other:—

The number of vagrants admitted into the casual ward of Wandsworth and Clapham was,

In 1846	6,759
1847	11,322
1848	14,675
1849	3,900

In the quarter ending June 1848, previously to the issuing of the minute, the number admitted was 7325, whereas, in the quarter ending December, after the minute had been issued, the number fell to 1035.

The cost of relief for casuals at the same union in the year 1848 was 94*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.*; in 1849 it was 24*l.* 10*s.* 1*d.*

The decrease throughout all London has been equally striking. From the returns of the Poor-law Commissioners, as subjoined, I find that the total number of vagrants relieved in the metropolitan unions in 1847-48 was no less than 310,058, whereas, in the year 1848-49, it had decreased to the extent of 166,000 and odd, the number relieved for that year being only 143,064.

During the great prevalence of vagrancy, the cost of the sick was far greater than the expense of relief. In the quarter ending June 1848, no less than 322 casuals were under medical treatment, either in the workhouse of the Wandsworth and Clapham union or at the London Fever Hospital. The whole cost of curing the casual sick in 1848 was near upon 300*l.*, whereas, during 1849 it is computed not to have exceeded 30*l.*

Another curious fact, illustrative of the effect of an alteration in the administration of the law respecting vagrancy, is to be found in the proportion of vagrants committed for acts of insubordination in the workhouses. In the year 1846, when those who broke the law were committed to Brixton, where the diet was better than that allowed at the workhouse—the cocoa and soup given at the treadmill being especial objects of attraction, and indeed the allowance of food being considerably higher there—the vagrants generally broke the windows, or tore their clothes, or burnt their beds, or refused to work, in order to be committed to the treadmill; and this got to such a height in that year, that no less than 467 persons were charged and convicted with disorderly conduct in the workhouse. In the year following, however, an alteration was made in the diet of prisoners sentenced to not more than fourteen days, and the prison of Kingston, of which they had a greater terror, was substituted for that of Brixton, and then the number of committals decreased from 467 to 57; while in 1848, when the number of vagrants was more than double what it had been in 1846, the committals again fell to 37; and in 1849, out of 3900 admissions, there were only 10 committed for insubordination.

VAGRANTS, OR TRAMPS, ADMITTED INTO THE WORKHOUSES OF THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS DURING THE YEARS 1847-8 AND 1848-9.

WORKHOUSES.	Popula- tion.	First Quarter, ending Christmas.		Second Quar- ter, ending Lady-day.		Third Quarter, ending Midsummer.		Fourth Quar- ter, ending Michaelmas.		TOTAL.	
		1847	1848	1848	1849	1848	1849	1848	1849	1848	1849
Kensington.....	26,830	3,502	2,667	1,369	1,233	5,580	7	4,125	10	14,866	3,917
Chelsea	40,177	2,480	4,507	1,985	4,146	2,604	5,189	2,849	1,357	9,918	15,199
Fulham	22,772	2,014	162	805	157	1,352	452	1,137	246	5,308	9,017
St. George, Hanover-square...	66,453	50	...	10	...	...	...	...	...	60	...
St. Margaret's, Westminster...	56,481	1,514	2,575	2,973	1,809	2,100	1,815	2,339	1,211	8,926	7,410
St. Martin-in-the-Fields	25,195	3,875	847	3,637	428	2,718	536	...	12	10,230	1,823
St. James, Westminster	37,398	96	139	127	86	104	86	79	61	416	371
Marylebone	138,164	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Paddington.....	25,173	48	1,450	566	1,455	1,438	1,525	1,176	948	3,228	5,378
Hampstead	10,093	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
St. Pancras	128,479	3,762	7,427	2,982	4,439	6,097	3,911	7,422	4,082	20,263	19,859
Islington	55,690	944	944	823	374	2,439	2,518	1,148	725	6,079	4,561
Hackney	42,274	89	210	76	123	280	308	245	192	690	833
St. Giles	54,292	106	174	106	132	100	86	244	189	556	581
Strand	43,894	663	62	1,063	6	3,040	...	63	...	4,829	68
Holborn	53,045	4,309	1,808	3,346	2,234	4,302	2,708	3,072	1,197	15,029	7,947
Clerkenwell	56,756	115	43	42	5	115	26	25	14	297	88
St. Luke's	49,829	691	575	841	1,086	1,258	1,251	1,293	497	4,083	3,409
East London	39,655	1,720	962	1,116	1,390	1,863	1,975	1,176	585	5,875	4,912
West London	33,629	3,915	2,481	2,873	2,279	3,966	2,914	3,264	2,103	14,018	9,777
London City	55,967	8,703	5,709	8,181	1,476	11,090	384	9,732	256	36,706	6,825
Shoreditch	83,432	959	1,585	721	1,274	1,121	1,954	1,399	1,108	4,200	5,921
Bethnal-green	74,087	291	441	315	227	454	538	501	415	1,561	1,620
Whitechapel	71,758	4,654	1,074	4,454	612	4,552	1,123	3,744	495	17,404	3,304
St. George-in-the-East	41,351	5,228	31	4,572	...	7,977	...	5,713	...	23,290	31
Stepney	90,657	4,229	4,801	4,318	3,428	6,564	3,984	6,243	1,656	21,354	12,869
Poplar	31,091	2,838	835	3,463	474	5,019	278	2,516	150	13,836	1,737
St. Saviour, Southwark	32,980	30	7	7	8	...	...	...	...	37	15
St. Olave.....	18,427	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bermondsey	34,947	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
St. George, Southwark	46,622	272	2,673	1,176	2,316	1,240	1,810	1,484	919	4,172	6,918
Newington	54,606	2,196	3,796	4,022	1,841	5,025	132	4,217	206	15,460	5,975
Lambeth	115,883	10,221	483	7,530	674	4,917	873	3,358	486	26,026	2,516
Wandsworth	39,853	2,444	784	3,374	1,257	5,730	1,344	1,858	463	13,406	3,848
Camberwell	39,867	907	768	706	463	1,625	793	1,122	80	4,360	2,104
Rotherhithe	13,916	375	445	161	439	309	917	353	826	1,288	2,627
Greenwich	80,811	2,977	283	2,436	384	4,761	481	4,908	256	15,082	1,404
Lewisham	23,013	13	2	4	...	18	7	43	3	78	12
Total	76,230	51,700	70,180	35,255	99,846	33,325	77,198	20,748	310,058	143,064	

Of the character of the vagrants frequenting the unions in the centre of the metropolis, and the system pursued there, one description will serve as a type of the whole.

At the Holborn workhouse (St. Andrew's) there are two casual wards, established just after the passing of the Poor-law Amendment Act in 1834. The men's ward will contain 40, and the women's 20. The wards are underground, but dry, clean, and comfortable. When there was a "severe pressure from without," as a porter described it to me, as many as 106 men and women have been received on one night, but some were disposed in other parts of the workhouse away from the casual wards.

"Two years and a half ago, 'a glut of Irish'" (I give the words of my informant) "came over and besieged the doors incessantly; and when above a hundred were admitted, as many were remaining outside, and when locked out they lay in the streets stretched along by the almshouse close to the workhouse in Gray's-inn-lane." I again give the statement (which afterwards was verified) *verbatim*:—"They lay in camps," he said, "in

their old cloaks, some having brought blankets and rugs with them for the purpose of sleeping out; pots, and kettles, and vessels for cooking when they camp; for in many parts of Ireland they do nothing—I've heard from people that have been there—but wander about; and these visitors to the workhouse behaved just like gipsies, combing their hair and dressing themselves. The girls' heads, some of them, looked as if they were full of caraway seeds—vermin, sir—shocking! I had to sit up all night; and the young women from Ireland—fine-looking young women; some of them finer-looking women than the English, well made and well formed, but uncultivated—seemed happy enough in the casual wards, singing songs all night long, but not too loud. Some would sit up all night washing their clothes, coming to me for water. They had a cup of tea, if they were poorly. They made themselves at home, the children did, as soon as they got inside; they ran about like kittens used to a place. The young women were often full of joke; but I never heard an indecent word from any of them, nor an oath, and I have no doubt, not in the least,

that they were chaste and modest. Fine young women, too, sir. I have said, 'Pity young women like you should be carrying on this way' (for I felt for them), and they would say, 'What can we do? It's better than starving in Ireland, this workhouse is.' I used to ask them how they got over, and they often told me their passages were paid, chiefly to Bristol, Liverpool, and Newport, in Monmouthshire. They told me that was done to get rid of them. They told me that they didn't know by whom; but some said, they believed the landlord paid the captain. Some declared they knew it, and that it was done just to get rid of them. Others told me the captain would bring them over for any trifle they had; for he would say, 'I shall have to take you back again, and I can charge my price then.' The men were uncultivated fellows compared to the younger women. We have had old men with children who could speak English, and the old man and his wife could not speak a word of it. When asked the age of their children (the children were the interpreters), they would open the young creatures' mouths and count their teeth, just as horse-dealers do, and then they would tell the children in Irish what to answer, and the children would answer in English. The old people could never tell their own age. The man would give his name, but his wife would give her maiden name. I would say to an elderly man, 'Give me your name.' 'Dennis Murphy, your honour.' Then to his wife, 'And your name?' 'The widdy Mooney, your honour.' 'But you're married?' 'Sure, then, yes, by Father—.' This is the case with them still. Last night we took in a family, and I asked the mother—there was only a woman and three children—her name. 'The widdy Callaghan, indeed, then, sir.' 'But your Christian name?' 'The widdy, (widow,) was the only answer. It's shocking, sir, what ignorance is, and what their sufferings is. My heart used to ache for the poor creatures, and yet they seemed happy. Habit's a great thing—second nature, even when people's shook. The Irishmen behaved well among themselves; but the English cadgers were jealous of the Irish, and chaffed them, as spoiling their trade—that's what the cadging fellows did. The Irish were quiet, poor things, but they were provoked to quarrel, and many a time I've had to turn the English rips out. The Irish were always very thankful for what they had, if it was only a morsel; the English cadger is never satisfied. I don't mean the decent beat-out man, but the regular cadger, that won't work, and isn't a good beggar, and won't starve, so they steal. Once, now and then, there was some suspicion about the Irish admitted, that they had money, but that was never but in those that had families. It was taken from them, and given back in the morning. They wouldn't have been admitted again if they had any amount. It was a kind-

ness to take their money, or the English rascals would have robbed them. I'm an Englishman, but I speak the truth of my own countrymen, as I do of the Irish. The English we had in the casual wards were generally a bad cadging set, as saucy as could be, particularly men that I knew, from their accent, came from Nottinghamshire. I'd tell one directly. I've heard them, of a night, brag of their dodges—how they'd done through the day—and the best places to get money. They would talk of gentlemen in London. I've often heard them say, —, in Piccadilly, was good; but they seldom mentioned names, only described the houses, especially club-houses in St. James's-street. They would tell just where it was in the street, and how many windows there was in it, and the best time to go, and 'you're sure of grub,' they'd say. Then they'd tell of gentlemen's seats in the country—sure cards. They seldom give names, and, I believe, don't know them, but described the houses and the gentlemen. Some were good for bread and money, some for bread and ale. As to the decent people, we had but few, and I used to be sorry for them when they had to mix with the cadgers; but when the cadgers saw a stranger, they used their slang. I was up to it. I've heard it many a night when I sat up, and they thought I was asleep. I wasn't to be had like the likes o' them. The poor mechanic would sit like a lost man—scared, sir. There might be one deserving character to thirty cadgers. We have had gipsies in the casual wards; but they're not admitted a second time, they steal so. We haven't one Scotch person in a month, or a Welshman, or perhaps two Welshmen, in a month, among the casuals. They come from all counties in England. I've been told by inmates of 'the casual,' that they had got 2s. 6d. from the relieving officers, particularly in Essex and Suffolk—different unions—to start them to London when the 'straw-yards' (the asylums for the houseless) were opened; but there's a many very decent people. How they suffer before they come to that! you can't fancy how much; and so there should be straw-yards in a Christian land—we'll call it a Christian land, sir. There's far more good people in the straw-yards than the casuals; the dodgers is less frequent there, considering the numbers. It's shocking to think a decent mechanic's houseless. When he's beat out, he's like a bird out of a cage; he doesn't know where to go, or how to get a bit—but don't the cadgers!" The expense of relieving the people in the casual ward was twopence per head, and the numbers admitted for the last twelve months averaged only twelve nightly."

I will now give the statements of some of the inmates of the casual wards themselves. I chose only those at first who were habitual vagrants.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBERS AND COST OF VAGRANTS.

LET me first endeavour to arrive at some estimate as to the number and cost of the vagrant population.

There were, according to the returns of the Poor-law Commissioners, 13,547 vagrants relieved in and out of the workhouses of England and Wales, on the 1st of July, 1848. In addition to these, the Occupation Abstract informs us that, on the night of the 6th of June, 1841, when the last census was taken, 20,348 individuals were living in barns and tents. But in order to arrive at a correct estimate of the total number of vagrants throughout the country, we must add to the above numbers the inmates of the trampers' houses. Now, according to the Report of the Constabulary Commissioners, there were in 1839 a nightly average of very nearly 5000 vagrants infesting some 700 mendicants' lodging-houses in London and six other of the principal towns of England and Wales. (See "London Labour," Vol. I. p. 408.) Further, it will be seen by the calculations given at the same, that there are in the 3823 postal towns throughout the country (averaging two trampers' houses to each town, and ten trampers nightly to each house), and 76,400 other vagrants distributed throughout England and Wales.

Hence the calculation as to the total number of vagrants would stand thus:—

In the workhouses	13,547
In barns and tents (according to census)	20,348
In the mendicants' houses of London, and six other principal towns of England and Wales, according to Constabulary Commissioners' Report	4,813
Ditto in 3820 other postal towns, averaging each two mendicants' houses, and ten lodgers to each house	76,400
	115,108
Deduct five per cent for characters really destitute and deserving	5,755
Total number of habitual vagrants in England and Wales	109,353

The cost of relieving these vagrants may be computed as follows:—On the night of the 1st of July, 1848, there were 13,547 vagrants relieved throughout England and Wales; but I am informed by the best authorities on the subject, that one-third of this number only can be fairly estimated as receiving relief every night throughout the year at the different unions. Now, the third of 13,547 is 4515,

and this, multiplied by 365, gives 1,647,975 as the total number of cases of vagrancy relieved throughout England and Wales during the year 1848. The cost of each of these is estimated at twopence per head per night for food, and this makes the sum expended in their relief amount to 13,733l. 7s. 8d.

In addition to this, we must estimate the sum given in charity to the mendicants, or carried off surreptitiously by the petty thieves frequenting the tramping-houses. The sums thus abstracted from the public may be said to amount at the lowest to 6d. per day for each of the trampers not applying for relief at the workhouses. In the Constabulary Report, p. 11, the earnings of the petty thieves are estimated at 10s. per week, and those of the beggars at 3s. 6d. per day (p. 24). Hence we have the following account of the total cost of the vagrants of England and Wales:—

Sum given in relief to the vagrants at the workhouses	£13,733 7 8
Sum abstracted by them, either by begging or pilfering on the road	138,888 11 8
	£152,621 19 4
As five per cent must be taken off this for the truly deserving	7,631 1 8

The total cost will be . £144,990 17 8

By this it appears that the total number of professional vagrants dispersed throughout England and Wales amounts to 47,669. These live at the expense of the industrious classes, and cost the country no less than 144,990l. 17s. 8d. per annum. And if the 13,000 and odd vagrants relieved in the workhouses constitute merely the twentieth dispersed throughout the country, we have in round numbers nearly 3,000,000l. for the cost of the whole.

There are, then, no less than 100,000 individuals of the lowest, the filthiest, and most demoralised classes, continually wandering through the country; in other words, there is a stream of vice and disease—a tide of iniquity and fever, continually flowing from town to town, from one end of the land to the other.

"One of the worst concomitants of vagrant mendicancy," says the Poor-law Report, "is the fever of a dangerous typhoid character, which has universally marked the path of the mendicants. There is scarcely a workhouse in which this pestilence does not prevail in a greater or less degree, and numerous union officers have fallen victims to it." Those who are acquainted with the exceeding filth of the persons frequenting the casual wards, will not wonder at the fever which follows in the wake

of the vagrants. "Many have the itch. I have seen," says Mr. Boase, "a party of twenty almost all scratching themselves at once, before settling into their rest in the straw. Lice exist in great numbers upon them."

That vagrancy is the nursery of crime, and that the habitual tramps are first the beggars, then the thieves, and, finally, the convicts of the country, the evidence of all parties goes to prove. There is, however, a curious corroboration of the fact to be found, by referring to the period of life at which both crime and vagrancy seem to be in their youth. The ages of the vagrants frequenting the asylums for the houseless poor, are chiefly between fifteen and twenty-five years old; and the tables of the ages of the criminals, given in the Government Returns, show that the majority of persons convicted of crime are equally young.

The total number of vagrants in the metropolis may be calculated as follows:—There were 310,058 vagrants relieved at the metropolitan unions during the year 1848. (I take the metropolitan returns of 1848, because those for England and Wales published as yet only extend to that year.) As the vagrants never remain two days in the same place, we must divide this number by 365, in order to ascertain the number of vagrants resident at one and the same time in London. This gives us 849 for the average number relieved each night in the whole of the metropolitan unions. To this we must add the 2431 tramps residing in the 221 metropolitan mendicants' lodging-houses (averaging 11 inmates each); and the sum of these must be further increased by the 750 individuals relieved nightly at the asylums for the houseless poor (including that of Market-street, Edgeware-road), for the majority of these seldom or never make their appearance in the casual wards of the metropolis, but are attracted to London solely by the opening of the asylums. Hence the account will stand as follows:—

Average number of vagrants relieved night in the metropolitan unions	849
Average number of vagrants resident in the mendicants' lodging-houses in London	2431
Average number of individuals relieved at the metropolitan asylums for the houseless poor	750

4030

Now, as 5 per cent of this amount is said to consist of characters really destitute and deserving, we arrive at the conclusion that there are 3829 vagrants in London, living either by mendicancy or theft.

The cost of the vagrants in London in the year 1848 may be estimated as follows:—

310,058 vagrants relieved at the metropolitan unions, at the cost of 2d. per head	£ 2,584 13 0
67,500 nights' lodgings afforded to the houseless poor at the metropolitan asylums, including the West-end Asylum, Market-street, Edgeware road	3,134 1 4½
2,431 inmates of the mendicants' lodging-houses in London, gaining upon an average 1s. per day, or altogether per year	44,365 15 0
	£59,084 9 4½
Deduct 5 per cent for the cost of the relief of the truly deserving	2,504 4 5
The total will then be	£47,580 4 11½

It appears, then, that there are 3829 habitual vagrants in the metropolis, and the cost for their support annually amounts to 47,580l. 4s. 11½d.

The number of metropolitan beggars is considerably increased on the eve of any threatened disturbances, or any large open-air meeting in London. For several days previous to the Chartist display in 1848, there was an influx of 100 tramps over and above the ordinary quantity, each day, at one union alone in the suburbs of London; and the master assured me that on the night of the meeting on Kennington Common, he overheard the inmates of the casual ward boasting how they had assisted in pillaging the pawnbroker's house that had been broken into that afternoon.

Well might the master of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union say, therefore, that the vagrants form one of the most restless, discontented, vicious, and dangerous elements of society. Of these we have seen that there are about 100,000 dispersed throughout the country, 4000 of whom, in round numbers, are generally located in London. These constitute, in the words of the same gentleman, the main source from which the criminals are continually recruited and augmented.

ROUTES OF THE VAGRANTS.

I was desirous of ascertaining some information concerning the routes of the vagrants, and the reason why they frequent one district or county more than another. It will be seen from the following table, computed from the Poor-Law Returns for the 1st July, 1848, that the vagrants were far from equally distributed over the country at that period.

NUMBER OF VAGRANTS RELIEVED IN THE DIFFERENT COUNTIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES ON THE 1st OF JULY, 1848.

Durham	1425	Essex	147	Oxfordshire	46
Middlesex	1393	Northamptonshire	136	Carmarthenshire	46
Lincolnshire	1355	Wiltshire	135	Radnorshire	46
West Riding	1197	Westmoreland	130	Denbighshire	45
Cumberland	1087	Nottinghamshire	129	Dorsetshire	43
Lancashire	673	Norfolk	128	Cardiganshire	39
Southampton	648	North Riding	105	Carnarvonshire	38
Derbyshire	541	Bedfordshire	102	Buckinghamshire	28
Warwickshire	509	Hertfordshire	100	Suffolk	21
Monmouthshire	475	Devonshire	94	Cambridgeshire	20
Staffordshire	351	Cheshire	92	Brecknockshire	17
Surrey	319	Somersetshire	88	Pembrokeshire	15
Glamorganshire	244	Shropshire	80	Montgomeryshire	14
Worcestershire	227	Huntingdonshire	75	Anglesea	11
Kent	179	Leicestershire	72	Flintshire	10
Berkshire	175	Cornwall	63	Rutlandshire	6
Northumberland	172	Merionethshire	54		
East Riding	152	Gloucestershire	52		
Sussex	150	Herefordshire	48		
				Total	13,547

In order to discover the cause of this unequal distribution, I sought out a person, whom I knew to be an experienced trumper, and who had offered to give any information that I might require upon the subject. There was a strange mystery about the man. It was evident, both from his manner and his features, that he had once been well to do in the world. He was plainly not of the common order of vagrants, though his dress was as filthy and ragged as that of the generality of the class.

"I have been right through the country on the tramp," he said, "about six or seven summers. What I was formerly I do not wish to state. I have been much better off. I was, indeed, in receipt of a very large income at one time; but it matters not how I lost it. I would rather that remained a secret. You may say that I lost it through those follies and extravagancies that are incident both to the higher and the lower classes; but let it pass. You want to know about the habits and characters of the vagrants generally, and there is no necessity for my going into my private history, further than saying, I was a gentleman once, and I am a vagrant now. I have been so for the last six years. I generally start off into the country about April or May. I stay, after the refuges are closed, until such time as I have tired out all the unions in and around London. I go into the country because I am known at all the casual wards in the metropolis, and they will not let a trumper in a second time if they know it, except at the City of London, and there I have been allowed to stay a month together. The best of the casual wards used to be in Bermondsey, but they are closed there now, I believe, as well as many of the others; however, the vagrants seldom think of going to the London unions

until after the refuges are closed, because at the refuges the accommodation is better, and no work is required. I know that the vagrants come purposely to London in large bodies about the end of December, on purpose to sleep at the refuges for the winter. I myself always make it a point to come up to town every winter, so as to have my lodgings for nothing at the refuge, not being able to get it by any other means. There are at the refuges, of course, many worthy objects of charity. I have met with men who have become destitute, certainly not through any fault of their own; a good many of such persons I have found. But still the greater number at such places are persons who are habitual vagabonds and beggars, and many thieves. As the refuges are managed at present, I consider they do more harm than good. If there were no such places in London in the winter, of course I, and such as are like me, would have been driven to find shelter at our parishes; whereas the facilities they afford for obtaining a night's shelter—to the vagabond as well as to the destitute—are such that a large number of the most depraved and idle classes are attracted to London by them. I believe some such places to be necessary, in order to prevent persons dying of cold and starvation in the streets, but they should be conducted on a different plan. You see I tell you the truth, although it may be against my own interest. After these refuges are closed, and the unions round the suburbs are shut against me, as far as Richmond, Kingston, Bromley, Romford, Stratford, Greenwich, and similar distances from the metropolis, I generally proceed upon my travels for the summer. Those who make a practice of sleeping at the casual wards are vagrants either by nature, by habit, or by

force of circumstances. They generally support themselves by begging or thieving, and often by both. They are mostly boys, from about nine up to twenty years of age. The others are principally Irish beggars, and a very few are labourers and mechanics out of work. The youths I believe to be, with some exceptions, naturally bad, and almost irreclaimable. I know that many of them have been made vagrants by harsh treatment at home; they have run away. They have been threatened to be punished, generally for going to some place of amusement, as Greenwich fair, or 'penny gaffs,'—that is, to the low theatres; and, being afraid to return, they have sought shelter, first at the low lodging-houses, and when they have had no money left, they have gone to the casual wards of the unions. Other boys have contracted bad habits from being allowed by their parents to run about the streets and pick up vagabond companions. These soon initiate them into their mode of life, and they then leave their homes in order to follow it. This is the way that most of the lads are depraved. I am sure that the fault lies more with the parents than with the boys themselves. The lads are either neglected or ill-treated in their youth. Some of the lads are left destitute; they are left orphans—probably to the care of some distant relation or friend—and the lads very soon find that they are not treated or cared for like the other members of the family, and they take to the streets. The majority of the vagrants are very sharp, intelligent lads, and I believe they are induced to take to a vagabond life by the low lodging-houses, the casual wards, and the refuges. These make shelter and provision so easy to them, that they soon throw off the restraint of their parents or guardians. Were there a greater difficulty of obtaining food and lodging, I am sure that there would certainly not be the number of juvenile vagrants that there are. The Irish people who resort to the casual wards are beggars at heart and soul. Many of them I know have lodgings of their own, and they will give them up at the time the refuges are open. Some I have known to go into the refuge with the whole of their family on the Saturday night, and stop all Sunday, till the Monday morning, for the express purpose of obtaining the bread and cheese which is given away there on the Sunday. The children have the same allowance as the parents, and the mother and father take all the young ones they can into the place, to get the greater quantity. This they take back home with them, and it serves to keep them the greater part of the week. The Irish, I think, do not make a point of travelling the country so much as the English vagrants. When they go into the provinces, it is generally to get work at harvesting, or 'tato getting, or hop-picking; not like the English, for the mere sake of vagabondising.

"The low Irish do better in London. They

are the best beggars we have. They have more impudence and more blarney, and therefore they do much better than we can at it. A very large portion of the Irish beggars in London are in possession of money, which they have secreted about them in some way or other. I recollect seeing one Irishman have 8s. taken from him by the vagrant boys in the casual ward of St. George's Workhouse, in the Borough. The boys generally suspect the Irish vagrants of having money on their persons; and I have often seen a number of them hold, or, as they call it, 'small-gang,' an Irish beggar in the darkness of the casual wards, while some of the other boys rifled the Irishman's pockets. The labourers and mechanics are generally the only parties to be found in the casual wards who are driven there through destitution. I have known many an honest, industrious, working man, however, made a regular beggar and vagrant by continued use of the casual wards. They are driven there first by necessity, and then they learn that they can live in such places throughout the year without working for their livelihood. Many a hard-working man, I am convinced, is made idle and dishonest by such means: yes, that is the case. There are some that I know now, who have been going the round of the different refuges for not less than seven—ay, you may say for nine years. They were originally labouring men, or mechanics, and had given over all thoughts of working, finding that there was no necessity to do so in order to live.

"The regular vagrant leaves town every year about April, or the beginning of May. A very large portion of the wandering beggars and thieves would remain in town if they were allowed to remain longer in their nightly haunts; but after the closing of the refuges, the system of not permitting them more than one night in the same union forces them to be continually on the move: so they set off immediately they have made themselves known at all the workhouses. The boys will mostly go in small gangs of twos and threes. Before they start, they generally pick up from some other gang whom they meet in the London wards, the kind of treatment and relief they will receive at the country unions, and they regulate their journey accordingly; and they will very often go one or two days' march out of their way, in order to avoid some union that has a bad character among them, or to get to some other union where the accommodation is good, and the work required of them very slight. Often they will go miles round to get to some gentleman's seat or hall where provisions are known to be distributed. I have heard boys not twelve years of age tell every union between London and Newcastle. The majority of them seldom go further than there; some will go on to Edinburgh, but not many. They would know what kind of treatment and provision would be obtained at each union, and

what form of application was necessary in order to gain admittance. Very many of them will go from London, first into Essex (the unions are good there, and the stages not long); then perhaps through Suffolk, keeping tolerably near the coast, because the shipping is attractive to most boys of their age; thence they will proceed, by long or short stages, according to the distance of the unions, through Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Few of the vagrants miss Leeds, there being a Mendicity Asylum in the town, where a good night's lodging is given to them, and threepence or fourpence, and in some cases sixpence (according to the apparent worthiness of the applicant) is bestowed upon each. I believe the habitual vagrants will go three or four stages out of the direct road to make Leeds in their way. From here they will go in different directions towards Durham and Northumberland, or, perhaps, to Manchester, where there is a society of the same kind as at Leeds, supported by the Quakers, where similar relief is afforded. At Northumberland, the body of vagrants generally turn back and begin to steer southwards. Some, indeed, will go as far as Berwick; but as the relief afforded in Scotland is not obtained so readily as in England, they seldom, as I have said, proceed northward beyond that point. The Scotch are 'too far north' for the regular English tramps. It is true they sometimes give them a little barley-cake, but, from all I have heard, the vagrants fare very poorly beyond Berwick. From Northumberland, they turn off towards Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire; and then many will go off through Cheshire into North Wales, and thence come round again into Shropshire. Others will wander through Staffordshire and Derbyshire, but most of them centre in Birmingham; that is a favourite meeting-place for the young vagrants. Here they make a point of tearing up their clothes, because for this offence they are committed to Warwick gaol for a month, and have a shilling on being discharged from the prison. It is not the diet of Warwick gaol that induces them to do this, but the shilling. Frequently they tear up their clothes in order to get a fresh supply. You see, sir, from continually sleeping in their clothes, and never washing their bodies, or changing their shirts—even if they have such things to change—they get to swarm with vermin, to such an extent that they cannot bear them upon their bodies. Oh! I have seen such sights sometimes—such sights as any decent, cleanly person would not credit. I have seen the lice on their clothes in the sunshine, as thick as blight on the leaves of trees. When their garments, from this cause, get very uncomfortable to them, they will tear them up, for the purpose of forcing the parish officers to give them some fresh ones. From Birmingham they will come up, generally through Northampton and Hertford, to London; for by this time either the

refuges will be about opening, or the lads will have been forgotten at the unions in and around the metropolis. They say that London is fresh to them, when, owing either to long absence, or some alteration in their appearance, they are looked upon as strangers by the masters or porters of the workhouses. London, on the other hand, they say, is dead to them, when they have become too well known at such places. Some will make only a short turn out of London, going across the country through Sussex, Hampshire, or Wiltshire. Hampshire they are attracted to in large numbers, in consequence of the charity distributed at Winchester." [It will be seen by the table above given, that Southampton stands very high among the places upon the vagrant list.] "In these parts the vagrants keep crossing the country to various 'reliefs,' as they call it, and so manage to spin out nearly two months in the autumn. The vagrants mostly go down with the fashionables to the sea-side in the latter part of the year—the practised beggars in particular. In the spring they generally make for the north of England. I believe there are more beggars and tramps in Durham, Lincolnshire, and Yorkshire, than in half of the other parts of England put together." "Begging is more profitable there than in any other quarter of the kingdom. A man may pick up more provisions in the day-time in those counties than anywhere else. The farmers are more liberal in those parts, which are great places for pudding, pies, and cakes; and of these the young tramps are remarkably fond. Round about these parts the tramps pass the summer. If the weather is fine and mild, they prefer 'skipping it,' that is, sleeping in an outhouse or hay-field, to going to a union. They have no trouble in getting 'scrans,' or provisions there, and they object to the work connected with the casual wards. In the autumn, they are mostly in Sussex or Kent; for they like the hop-picking. It is not hard work, and there are a great many loose girls to be found there. I believe many a boy and man goes hop-picking who never does anything else during the year but beg. The female tramps mostly go down to Kent to pick up their 'young chaps,' as they call them; and with them they travel through the country as long as they can agree, or until either party meets with some one they are better pleased with, and then they leave the other, or bury them, as they term it.

"The Irish vagrants are mostly to be found on the roads from Liverpool or from Bristol to London. I should think that at the end of June the roads must be literally covered with the Irish families tramping to London. They come over in boatsful, without a penny in their pockets, to get a little work during the harvesting and hop-picking. Such of them as make up their minds to return to their country after the autumn, contrive, by some means, to

send their money to Ireland, and then they apply to the English parishes to send them home. It is very rare indeed that the low Irish go to the expense of paying for their lodging, even when they have money. They make a point of going to the unions, where they not only get a nightly shelter, but a pound of bread for nothing. Whatever money they have, they generally give to some countryman, who is their banker, and he sleeps in another place, for fear he should be searched or robbed at the casual wards. The Irish are mostly very filthy and diseased. They live upon little or nothing, and upon the worst kind of provision that can be bought, even though it be not fit for human food. They will eat anything. The Irish tramp lives solely by begging. It has often astonished me, sir, that there are scarcely any Welsh tramps. I suppose this comes from the industry of the people. The English tramp lives by begging and stealing.—I think, mostly by stealing; a thorough tramp gets more that way than the other. If he goes to the back-door of a house on the pretence of begging, and sees any linen, or brushes, or shoes, or, indeed, even a bit of soap, he will be off with it, and sell it, mostly to the keeper of some low lodging-house where he may put up for the night. They seldom commit highway robberies, and are generally the very lowest and meanest of thieves. No one can imagine, but those who have gone through it, the horror of a casual ward of a union; what with the filth, the vermin, the stench, the heat, and the noise of the place, it is intolerable. The usual conversation is upon the adventures of the day. One recounts how he stole this thing, and another that. Some tell what police are stationed in the different towns; others, what places to go to either to beg, rob, or sleep; and others, what places to beware of. I have passed seven years of my life in this way, and I have been so used to tramping about, that when the spring comes round I must be on the move. In the winter there is more food to be picked up in London than in the country, and the beggars seldom fail to make a good thing of it in the cold weather. I have met with beggars in Carnarvon who had come all the way from London for the express purpose of begging from the visitors to the Snowdon mountains. There are very few houses round about, but a good deal is picked up from the company coming to the hotels."

I shall now conclude this account of the numbers, cost, and character of the country and the metropolis, with the narratives of two female tramps.

The first—a young woman 20 years of age—gave me the following statement. Her face was what the vulgar would call "good-looking," as her cheeks were full and deep-coloured, and her eyes tolerably bright, and her teeth good. She was very stout, too. Her dress was tolerably clean and good, but sat close about

her, as if she had no under-clothing. She said:—

"I am a native of —, where my father was a woolcomber. I was an only child. I can't remember my mother; she died when I was so young. My father died more than four years ago. I've heard as much since I left home. I was sent to the National School. I can read, but can't write. My father went to work at Wellington, in Somersetshire, taking me with him, when I was quite a little girl. He was a good father and very kind, and we had plenty to eat. I think of him sometimes: it makes me sorrowful. He would have been sadly distressed if he had seen me in this state. My father married again when I was 12, I suppose. He married a factory-woman. She was about 30. She wasn't good to me. She led me a dreadful life, always telling my father stories of me,—that I was away when I wasn't, and he grumbled at me. He never beat me, but my stepmother often beat me. She was very bad-tempered, and I am very bad-tempered, too—very passionate; but if I'm well treated my passion doesn't come out. She beat me with anything that came first to hand, as the hearth-brush, and she flung things at me. She disliked me, because she knew I hated my father marrying again. I was very happy before that, living with my father. I could cook dinner for him, young as I was, make his bed, and do all those sort of things, all but his washing. I had a bed to myself. My father was a good man. He came home drunk sometimes, but not often. It never made any difference in him, he was always kind. He seemed comfortable with my stepmother, but I wasn't. I used to tell my father how she used me, but he said it was nonsense. This went on till I was 15, when I ran away. I'm sure I had been a good girl till then. I never slept out of my father's house up to that time, and didn't keep company with any young men. I could stand my stepmother's treatment no longer. If she had been kind I wouldn't have run away. I was almost as big then as I am now. I had 4s. or 5s. with me, I don't remember just how much, I started in such a passion; but it was money I had saved up from what my father had given me. I took no clothes with me but what I had on. I was tidily dressed. It was in the haymaking time, and I made straight away to London. I was so young and in such a rage, I couldn't think of nothing but getting away. When I cooled I began to think of my father, but at home I had heard of young girls being sent out to Australia and having done well, and I thought I could easily get sent out from London, and so I went on. I slept in lodging-houses. I was shocked the first night I got into Bridgewater, men, women, and boys, all sleeping in the same room. I slept with another young woman, a travelling-woman, but married. I couldn't think of going back. I couldn't humble myself before that step-

mother. I thought anything would be better than that. I couldn't sleep at all the first night I was out. I never was in such a bed before. A young man who saw me there wanted me to live with him; he was a beggar, and I didn't like a beggar, and I wouldn't have nothing to say to him. He wasn't impudent; but he followed me to Bristol, all the time, whenever I met with him, teasing me to live with him. I lived on my money as long as I could, and then had to go and sleep in a union. I don't know where. It was a dreadful place. The rats ran over my head while I slept; and I prayed for daylight—for I used to pray then. I don't now. I don't like the thoughts of it. At last I got to London. I was sitting in Hyde-park thinking where I should go—I knew it was in Hyde-park, for I was taken up from it since. The park-keeper took me up for making a noise—that's a disturbance—in the park; me and some other young women: we were only washing ourselves where the horses drink, near the canteen. In Hyde-park, while I was sitting, as I've told you, some girls and some young men, and some older men, passed me, carrying rakes. I was sitting with three other girls I'd got acquainted with on the road, all Irish girls. The people that passed me said, 'We are going half-way to Watford a-haymaking. Go with us?' We all went. Each of those Irish girls soon took up with a mate. I think they had known each other before. I had a fortnight at haymaking. I had a mate at haymaking, and in a few days he ruined me. He told the master that I belonged to him. He didn't say I was his wife. They don't call us their wives. I continued with him a long time, living with him as his wife. We next went into Kent harvesting, then a-hopping, and I've been every summer since. He was kind to me, but we were both passionate—fire against fire—and we fought sometimes. He never beat me but once, for contradicting him. He wasn't jealous, and he had no reason to be so. I don't know that he was fond of me, or he wouldn't have run away. I liked him, and would have gone through trouble for him. I like him still. We never talked about marrying. I didn't care, for I didn't think about it. I lived with him, and was true to him, until he ran away in haymaking time in 1848. He ran away from me in Kent, where we were hopping. We hadn't quarrelled for some days before he started. I didn't think he was going, for he was kind to me just before. I left him once for a fortnight myself, through some quarrel, but he got me back again. I came up to London in a boat from Gravesend, with other hoppers. I lived on fifteen shillings I had saved up. I lived on that as long as it lasted—more than a week. I lodged near the Dials, and used to go drinking with other women I met with there, as I was fond of drink then. I don't like it so much now. We drank gin and beer. I kept to myself until my money was gone,

and then I looked out for myself. I had no particular friends. The women I drank with were some bad and some good. I got acquainted with a young girl as I was walking along the Strand looking out for my living by prostitution—I couldn't starve. We walked together. We couldn't stay in the Strand, where the girls were well-dressed, and so we kept about the Dials. I didn't think much about the life I was leading, because I got hardened. I didn't like it, though. Still I thought I should never like to go home. I lodged in a back-street near the Dials. I couldn't take anybody there. I didn't do well. I often wanted money to pay my lodgings, and food to eat, and had often to stay out all night perishing. Many a night out in the streets I never got a farthing, and had to walk about all day because I durstn't go back to my room without money. I never had a fancy man. There was all sorts in the lodging-house—thirty of them—pickpockets, and beggars, and cadgers, and fancy men, and some that wanted to be fancy men, but I never saw one that I liked. I never picked pockets as other girls did; I was not nimble enough with my hands. Sometimes I had a sovereign in my pocket, but it was never there a day. I used to go out a-drinking, treating other women, and they would treat me. We helped one another now and then. I was badly off for clothes. I had no illness except colds. The common fellows in the streets were always jeering at me. Sometimes missionaries, I think they're called, talked to me about the life I was leading, but I told them, 'You mind yourself, and I'll mind myself. What is it to you where I go when I die?' I don't steal anything. I swear sometimes now. When I was at home and good, I was shocked to hear such a thing. Me and the other girls used to think it clever to swear hard, and say bad words one to another or to anybody—we're not particular. If I went into the Magdalen, I know I couldn't stay there. I have not been there, but I know I couldn't, from what I've heard of it from the other girls, some of whom said they'd been; and I suppose they had, as there was no motive at all for them to tell lies about it. I have been in the casual wards at Holborn and Kensington when I was beat out. It was better than walking the streets. I think, by the life I lead—and without help I must lead it still, or starve—I sometimes get twenty shillings a-week, sometimes not more than five shillings. I would like best to go to Australia, where nobody would know me. I'm sure I could be- have myself there. There's no hope for me here: everybody that knows me despises me. I could take a service in Sydney. I could get rid of my swearing. I only swear now when I'm vexed—it comes out natural-like then. I could get rid of my love of drink. No one—no girl can carry on the life I do without drink. No girl's feelings would let her. I never met one but what said so, and I know

they all told the truth in that. I am strong and healthy, and could take a hard place with country work. That about Australia is the best wish I have. I'm sure I'm sick of this life. It has only drink and excitement to recommend it. I haven't a friend in the world. I have been told I was a fool not to pick pockets like other girls. I never begged but once, and that was as I was coming to London, and a woman said, 'You look better than I do!' so I never begged again—that checked me at once. But I've got tickets for the 'straw-yards,' or the 'leather-houses,' as some call them (asylums for the houseless). The old women all say it was far better when they were young. I think what a change it is from my country life; but when I get sad, I go and get a glass of gin, if I have the money. I can get a pennyworth in some houses. I can't do much at my needle. The idleness of the life I lead is terrible. There is nothing to interest me."

The next was a mere girl, who had lost all traces of feminine beauty. There was an impudence in her expression that was utterly repulsive; and even in her most serious moments it was evident that she had the greatest difficulty to restrain her inward levity. Her dress consisted principally of a ragged red and green plaid shawl, pinned tight over her neck, and a torn straw-bonnet, worn back upon her head.

"I have a father alive," she said; "I have got no mother. I have been away these three years. I came away with a chap. I was living, sir, when I was at home, with my father in Maidstone. My father was a gardener, and I used to work at shirt-making when I was at home with my father. My mother has been dead eight years, I think. I can't say how old I was then. I am twenty now. My father, after my mother's death, married again. She was dead seven years before he got another wife. He didn't marry again while I was at home. My mother was a very good mother. I was very fond of my mother, for she was a very good mother; but not of my father, for he was a bad father. Why, sir, he used to treat us three girls so ill, my biggest sister was obliged to go to Australia from him. My next sister was younger than me, and I don't know whether she is at home now; but I don't believe that she can stop at home, because I have been down as far as Maidstone since I went away with my young man, and I've heard that she's almost dead between the pair of them. By the pair of them, I mean my father and stepmother. My mother-in-law is the worst to my sister. My father was bad before she came; he was such a drunkard. We went to school, where we paid nothing a-week, in Maidstone; it's a free school. I can read. I can't write. All the money my father used to earn he used to drink, and leave us without any food. I went to the shirt-making when I was twelve years of age, and that used to

bring me about 4d. a-day, and with that I used to buy bread, for we never got a halfpenny from my father to keep us. My father used to work for a gentleman, and got pretty good wages. The young chap that I first took up with was a carpenter. He was apprenticed to the trade. He enticed me away. He told me if I'd come to London with him he'd do anything for me. I used to tell him how badly my father treated me, and he used to tell me not to stop at home. I have been knocking about three years, and I'm twenty now, so I leave you to say how old I was then. No, I can't say. I'm twenty now, and I've been away these three years, and I don't know how old that would make me. I never learnt any ciphering. My father used to beat us and knock us about when he came home drunk. I liked the young man that came a-courting on me very well. I thought all he said was true, and I thought he would make me much happier than I was at home." [Here she shook her head with apparent regret.] "Yes, sir, he promised he would marry me; but when I came over to London he ruined me, and then ran away and left me. I knew it was wrong to go away and live with him without being married; but I was wretched at home, and he told me he would make me his wife, and I believed him. He brought me up to London with him, into the Borough. He took me to a low lodging-house there. The charge was 6d. a-night for the two of us. There were six sleeping in the same room beside us two. They were men and women. Some of 'em were married, and some were not. He had 4s. 6d. when he came up to London with me, and I had none. He stopped with me. He stopped with me in the same house a week. He was 22 years of age, or 23, I can't say which. While he was with me he was very kind to me: oh, yes, sir, much kinder than my father, and I loved him a great deal more, I'm sure. I hadn't many clothes when I left my father's home. I had nothing but what I stood upright in. I had no more clothes when I was at home. When my young man left me there was another young girl in the same lodging-house, who advised me to turn out upon the streets. I went and took her advice. I did like the life for a bit, because I see'd there was money getting by it. Sometimes I got 4s. or 5s. a-day, and sometimes more than that. I still kept at the same house. There were a lot of girls like me at the same place. It was not a bad house, but they encouraged us like. No tramps used to come there, only young chaps and gals that used to go out thieving. No, my young man didn't thieve, not while he was with me, but I did afterwards. I've seen young chaps brought in there by the girls merely to pay their lodging-money. The landlady told us to do that; she said I could do better than knocking about with a man. If I hadn't had enough to pay for my lodging, I couldn't have had a bed to

lie on. We used to be all in the same room, chaps and girls, sometimes nine or ten couples in the same room—only little bits of girls and chaps. I have seen girls there 12 years of age. The boys was about 15 or 16. They used to swear dreadful. I fell out with the gal as first told me to go on the streets, and then I got with another at another house. I moved to Paddington. I lived at a little public-house there—a bad house; and I used to go out shoplifting with my pal. I used to take everything I could lay my hands on. We went one night, and I stole two dresses, at a linendraper's shop, and had two months a-piece for it. Yes, sir, I liked prison very well, because I had such bad clothes; and was glad to be out of the way. Some days we hardly had a bit to put in our mouths. Sometimes we used to get nothing shoplifting; the men, perhaps, would notice—the fly-men, as we called them. They used to be too wide-awake for us. Sometimes we used to make 5s. in the day; but then we used to spend it all in waste—why, spending it in anything. We'd buy fish, and meat, and baked potatoes, and pudding. No, sir, very little drink we had. We didn't care for gin, nor any liquor at all. There was none among us but one that cared for drink, and she used to pawn all her clothes for it. I dare say there was upwards of twelve or thirteen gals; the kitchen used to be full. The mistress used to treat us well if we paid her; but she used to holler at us if we didn't. The chaps used to serve her out so. They used to take the sheets, and blankets, and everything away from her. She was deaf. They was mostly all prigs that used to come to see us. They used to go out nailing—that's thieving. There was one that they used to call Fogerty was transported: another got seven months; and another got a twelvemonth. I had one fancy-man. He was a shoplifter and a pickpocket: he has got two years now. I went to see him once in quod; some calls it 'the Steel.' I cried a good deal when he got nailed, sir: I loved him. A little time after he went away, I went down into the country; down into Essex. I saw I couldn't get him off, 'cause it was for a watch, and the gentleman went so hard against him. I was with him at the time he stole it, but I didn't know he'd got it till I saw him run. I got the man down by a saw-mill; he was tipsy. He was a gentleman, and said he would give me five shillings if I would come along with him. My fancy-man always kept near to me whenever I went out of a night. I usen't to go out to take the men home; it was only to pick them up. My young man used to tell me how to rob the men. I'd get them up in a corner, and then I used to take out of their pockets whatever I could lay my hands on; and then I used to hand it over to him, and he used to take the things home and 'fence' them. We used to do a good deal this way sometimes: often we'd get enough

to keep us two or three days. At last he got caught for the watch; and when I see'd I couldn't get him off, I went down into the country—down into Essex, sir. I travelled all parts, and slept at the unions on the road. I met a young girl down in Town Malling, in Kent. I met her, and then we used to go begging together, and tramp it from one union to another. At last we got so ragged and dirty, and our things all got so bad, that we made up our minds to go in for three months into prison, at Battle, down in Sussex. We used to meet a great many on the road boiling their kettle, and sometimes we used to stop and skipper with them of a night. Skippering is sleeping in barns or under hedges, if it's warm weather. They weren't gipsies. We usen't to stop to speak to the gipsies—not much—unless we went to fairs or horse-races. Then we used to sit with them for a little while, if they had their tent. We generally used to steal on the way. If we could see anything, we used to take it. At last, when our clothes got bad, I and the other girl—she still kept with me—determined to break the parson's windows at Battle. We broke one because the house was good for a cant—that's some food—bread or meat, and they wouldn't give it us, so we got savage, and broke all the glass in the windows. For that we got three months. After we got out, the parson sent word for us to come to his house, and he gave us half-a-crown a-piece to take us on our road. He would have given us some clothes—we had no shoes and stockings: we was very bad off; but his wife was in London. So we went on the road tramping again, and I have been tramping it about the country ever since. I was all last winter in Town Malling union with the fever, and when I got well I set off tramping again. I didn't have no more chaps since I left my fancy-man—I mean, I never took up with no others, not to keep their company. I have been about two years tramping altogether; out of that I had five months in prison for stealing and breaking windows. I like the tramping life well enough in the summer, 'cause there's plenty of victuals to be had then, but it's the winter that we can't stand. Then we generally come to London, but we can't call at house to house here as we do in the country, so we make but a poor thing of it. I never was so bad off as I am now, excepting when I was at Battle, for I had no shoes or stockings then. The police is too sharp for us in London. I'm very fond of going through the country in fine weather. Sometimes we don't make much freedom with the chaps in the union, and sometimes we do. They tells us to go along with them, for they knows good houses to call at. What you make is all according to whether you're in a lone-some road. I've travelled a day, and not seen a house that I could get anything at. Some days I've got a shilling given to me, and some days as much as half-a-crown. We can always

get plenty of bread and meat, for countryfolks is very good. If I had some good things—that is, good boots—I should like to go into the country again. Sometimes we gets so much scran we sells it among ourselves. I should sell my lot to sometravellers on the road. They gives us 3d. or 4d., but we must give them a good lot for that. I can't say which is the best of the unions now, for they are all shut up. They used to be good at one time, but the Irish ruined them; they came in such swarms, the people, I knew, would never stand it. We used often to say of a night that them Irish Greeks would ruin the business. They are much better beggars than we are, though they don't get as much as the English, because they go in such swarms up to the door. Now, down in Hawkhurst, there used to be a twopenny loaf allowed to everybody that called at the parson's house, little and big; it was allowed by a lady, till the pigs of Irish came in such lots, that they spoilt all the game. The parson won't give it to no one now, except eight travelling-men in the morning. I know all the good houses, and the tidy grubbikens,—that's the unions where there's little or nothing to do for the food we gets. We walk mostly eleven miles a-day. If it's hot we walk only six miles, and turn in under a hedge if we've got our things with us to make a tent. We go all right round the country, up to Yorkshire, and as far as Northumberland. We don't try Warwick gaol, because the shilling they used to give on being discharged is stopped, excepting to those that's not been there before, and there's very few of the trampers, boys or girls, that hasn't. Then there's the twopenny-house down in High-

field, in Kent. I'm blowed if they ain't been and stopped that! I can't tell what's come to the country of late. It's got very bad and scaly, there's no hospitality going on. I've been two years at the business, and I've seen it grow worse and worse, meaner and meaner, every day before my very eyes. I don't know, I'm sure, what poor trampers will do if it gets any worse. Some do talk of the good old times, when there was plenty of money-getting in them days. I shouldn't like to give it up just yet. I do like to be in the country in the summer-time. I like haymaking and hopping, because that's a good bit of fun. Still, I'm sick and tired of what I'm doing now. It's the winter that sickens me. I'm worn out now, and I often sits and thinks of the life that I've led. I think of my kind, dear mother, and how good I would have been if my father had taught me better. Still, if I'd clothes I'd not give up my present life. I'd be down in the country now. I do love roving about, and I'm wretched when I'm not at it. After my mother died I never liked to be at home. I've seen many an unhappy day since I've been away; still, I wouldn't go back to my home, because it's no home to me."

LONDON VAGRANTS' ASYLUMS FOR THE HOUSELESS.

To give the reader an idea of the motley assemblage to be found in these places, I subjoin the following table (taken from the Report), by which it will be seen that almost every quarter of the globe contributes its quota of wretchedness:—

PLACES TO WHICH THE INDIVIDUALS SHELTERED BY THE HOUSELESS POOR SOCIETY DURING THE WINTER 1848-49 APPEARED TO BELONG.

Africa	12	Hampshire	414	Russia	7
America	78	Herefordshire	45	Rutlandshire	24
Bedfordshire	55	Hertfordshire	181	Scotland	230
Berkshire	267	Huntingdonshire	25	Shropshire	42
Buckinghamshire	88	Ireland	8068	Somersetshire	246
Cambridgeshire	88	Italy	7	Spain	10
Cheshire	40	Jersey	15	St. Helena	8
Cornwall	32	Kent	523	Staffordshire	129
Cumberland	12	Lancashire	811	Suffolk	133
Derbyshire	48	Leicestershire	75	Surrey	204
Denmark	6	Lincolnshire	85	Sussex	147
Devonshire	209	London	343	Wales	122
Dorsetshire	46	Middlesex	214	Warwickshire	160
Durham	54	Norfolk	163	West Indies	25
East Indies	19	Northamptonshire	67	Westmoreland	6
Essex	392	Northumberland	72	Wiltshire	87
France	14	Nottinghamshire	68	Worcestershire	96
Germany	53	Oxfordshire	100	Yorkshire	126
Gibraltar	3	Poland	4	Unknown	29
Gloucestershire	163	Portugal	5	Born at sea	5
Guernsey	32				

These places of shelter for the houseless are only open at certain periods of the year; and at this season a large proportion of the country labourers who are out of employ flock to London, either to seek for work in the winter-time, or to avail themselves of the food and lodging afforded by these charitable institutions. Others, again, who are professional vagrants, tramping through the country, and sleeping at the different unions on their road, come to town as regularly as noblemen every winter, and make their appearance annually in these quarters. Moreover, it is at this season of the year that the sufferings and privations of the really poor and destitute are rendered tenfold more severe than at any other period; and it is at the houses of refuge that the great mass of London, or rather English and Irish, poverty and misery, is to be met with.

The congregation at the Refuges for the Destitute is, indeed, a sort of ragged congress of nations—a convocation of squalor and misery—a synopsis of destitution, degradation, and suffering, to be seen, perhaps, nowhere else.

Nor are the returns of the bodily ailments of the wretched inmates of these abodes less instructive as to their miserable modes of life, their continual exposure to the weather, and their want of proper nutriment. The subjoined medical report of the diseases and bodily afflictions to which these poor creatures are liable, tells a tale of suffering which, to persons with even the smallest amount of pathological knowledge, must need no comment. The catarrh and influenza, the rheumatism, bronchitis, ague, asthma, lumbago—all speak of many long night's exposure to the wet and cold; whereas the abscesses, ulcers, the diarrhoea, and the excessive debility from starvation, tell, in a manner that precludes all doubt, of the want of proper sustenance and extreme privation of these, the very poorest of all the poor.

Medical Report for 1848-49. Of the persons who applied at the general asylum, there were afflicted with—

Catarrh and influenza	149
Incipient fever	52
Rheumatism	50
Atrophy	3
Dropsy	3
Ineised wounds	3
Diarrhoea	60
Cholera	2
Bronchitis	13
Abscess	15
Ulcers	11
Affections of the head	12
Ague	13
Excessive debility from starvation	17
Inflammation of lungs	2
Asthma	10

Epilepsy	4
Diseased joints	4
Erysipelas	3
Rupture	3
Cramps and pains in bowels	2
Spitting of blood	4
Lumbago	1
Rheumatic ophthalmia	2
Strumous disease	2
Sprains	1
Fractures	4
Pregnant	30

The returns of the different callings of the individuals seeking for the shelter of the refuges are equally curious and worthy of study. These, however, I shall reserve for my next letter, as, by comparing the returns for each year since the opening of the institution, now thirty years ago, we shall be enabled to arrive at almost an historical account of the distress of the different trades since the year 1820. These tables I am now preparing from the valuable yearly reports of the Society, one of the most deserving among all our charitable institutions, and one which, especially at this bitter season, calls for the support of all those who would give a meal and a bed to such as are too poor to have either.

I will now proceed to a description of the Refuge itself.

The only refuge for the houseless now open which is really a home for the homeless, is that in Playhouse-yard, Cripplegate. The doors open into a narrow by-street, and the neighbourhood needs no other announcement that the establishment is open for the reception of the houseless, than the assembly of a crowd of ragged shivering people, certain to be seen on the night of opening, as if they knew by instinct where they might be housed under a warm and comfortable roof. The crowd gathers in Playhouse-yard, and many among them look sad and weary enough. Many of the women carry infants at the breast, and have children by their sides holding by their gowns. The cries of these, and the wrangling of the hungry crowds for their places, is indeed disheartening to hear. The only sounds of merriment come from the errand-boys, as they call themselves, whom even starvation cannot make sorrowful for two hours together. The little struggle that there usually is among the applicants is not for a rush when the doors are opened, but for what they call the "front rank." They are made to stand clear of the footpath; and when five o'clock—the hour of admission—comes, an officer of the Refuge steps out, and quietly, by a motion of his hand, or a touch on the shoulder, sends in about 150 men and boys, and about 50 women and girls. He knows the great majority of those who have tickets which entitle them to one or two nights' further lodging (the tickets are generally for three nights), and these are commonly in the foremost rank. The number

thus admitted show themselves more or less at home. Some are quiet and abashed; but some proceed briskly, and in a business-like way, to the first process, to wash themselves. This is done in two large vessels, in what may be called the hall or vestibule of the building. A man keeps pumping fresh water into the vessels as fast as that used is drained off, and soap and clean towels are supplied when thought necessary; the clean towels, which are long, and attached to rollers, soon becoming, in truth, exceedingly dirty. I noticed some little contention—whether to show an anxiety to conform to the rules of the Refuge, or to hurry through a disagreeable but inevitable task, or really for the comfort of ablution, I will not pretend to determine—but there was some little contention for the first turn among the young men at the washing. To look down upon them from the main staircase, as I did, was to survey a very motley scene. There they were—the shirtless, the shoeless, the coatless, the unshaven, the uncouth, ay, and the decent and respectable. There were men from every part of the United Kingdom, with a coloured man or two, a few seamen, navigators, agricultural labourers, and artizans. There were no foreigners on the nights that I was there; and in the returns of those admitted there will not be found one Jew. It is possible that Jews may be entered under the heads of "Germans" or "Poles"—I mean, foreign Jews; but on my visits I did not see so much as any near approach to the Hebrew physiognomy. To attempt to give an account of anything like a prevailing garb among these men is impossible, unless I described it as rags. As they were washing, or waiting for a wash, there was some stir, and a loud buzz of talk, in which "the brogue" strongly predominated. There was some little fun, too, as there must be where a crowd of many youths is assembled. One in a ragged, coarse, striped shirt, exclaimed as he shoved along, "By your leave, gentlemen!" with a significant emphasis of his "gentlemen." Another man said to his neighbour, "The bread's fine, Joe; but the sleep, isn't that plummy?" Some few, I say, seemed merry enough, but that is easily accounted for. Their present object was attained, and your real professional vagabond is always happy by that—for a forgetfulness of the past, or an indifference to it, and a recklessness as to the future, are the primary elements of a vagrant's enjoyment. Those who had tickets were of course subjected to no further examination, unless by the surgeon subsequently; but all the new candidates for admission—and the officers kept admitting fresh batches as they were instructed—were not passed before a rigid examination, when a ticket for three nights was given to each fresh applicant. On the right hand, as you enter the building, is the office. The assistant-superintendent sits before a large

ledger, in which he enters every name and description. His questions to every fresh candidate are:—"Your name?" "How old are you?" "What trade?" "How do you live (if no trade)?" "Where did you sleep last night?" "To what parish do you belong?" In order to answer these questions, each fresh applicant for admission stands before the door of the office, a portion of the upper division of the door being thrown open. Whilst I was present, there was among a portion of the male applicants but little hesitation in answering the inquiries glibly and promptly. Others answered reluctantly. The answers of some of the boys, especially the Irish boys, were curious. "Where did you sleep last night?" "Well, then, sir, I sleep walking about the streets all night, and very cowld it was, sir." Another lad was asked, after he had stated his name and age, how he lived? "I beg, or do anything," he answered. "What's your parish?" "Ireland." (Several pronounced their parish to be the "county Corruk.") "Have you a father here?" "He died before we left Ireland." "How did you get here, then?" "I came with my mother." "Well, and where's she?" "She died after we came to England." So the child had the streets for a stepmother.

Some of the women were as glib and systematic in their answers as the men and boys. Others were much abashed. Among the glib-tongued women, there seemed no shamefacedness. Some of the women admitted here, however, have acquitted themselves well when provided (through charitable institutions) with situations. The absence of shame which I have remarked upon is the more notable, because these women were questioned by men, with other men standing by. Some of the women were good-looking; and when asked how old they were, they answered at once, and, judging by their appearance, never understated their years. Many I should have pronounced younger than they stated. Vanity, even with silliness and prettiness, does not seem to exist in their utter destitution.

All the regular processes having been observed (and the women have a place for their ablutions after the same fashion as the men), the applicants admitted enter their several wards. The women's ward is at the top of the building. It supplies accommodation, or berths, for 95 women in an apartment 35 yards in length and 6 in width. At one corner of this long chamber, a few steps lead down to what is called "the nursery," which has 30 berths. Most of these berths may be described as double, and are large enough to accommodate a mother and her children. The children, when I saw them, were gambolling about in some of the berths as merry as children elsewhere, or perhaps merrier, for they were experiencing the unwonted luxuries of warmth and food. The matron can supply these women and their

children with gruel at her discretion; and it appeared to be freely given. Some who had children seemed to be the best of all there in point of physiognomy. They had not, generally, the stolid, stupid, indifferent, or shameless look of many of the other women; it was as though the motherly feeling had somewhat humanized them. Some of the better sort of women spoke so low as to be hardly audible. Among them were, indeed, many decent-looking females.

The men's wards are the Chapel Ward (for the better sort of persons), containing 90 berths, one line being ranged 2 berths deep; the Lower Ward, containing 120 berths; the Boys' Ward, containing 60 berths; and the Straw Loft, 40. There is a walk alongside the berths in each ward. What is called the Boys' Ward is not confined to boys: it used to be so, but they were found so noisy that they could no longer be allowed a separate apartment. They are now scattered through the several wards with the men, the officers arranging them, and varying the arrangements as they consider best. Before there can be any retirement to rest, each man, woman, and child must be examined by a surgeon. Whilst I was present, a young assistant conducted the investigation in a careful, yet kindly and gentlemanly manner. Indeed, I was much struck with the sympathy and gentleness he displayed; and it was evident from the respect of the people, that kindness and consideration are the very qualities to impress and control the class he has to deal with. All afflicted with cutaneous disorders (and there were but five men so afflicted) were lodged apart from the others. Bronchitis and rheumatism are the prevalent disorders, occasioned by their exposure to the weather, and their frequent insufficiency of food. Ninety per cent of them, I was told by Mr. Gay, the intelligent surgeon of the establishment, might have coughs at some periods, but of that they thought nothing. Women advanced in pregnancy, and men with any serious (especially any infectious) ailment, are not permitted to sleep in the Refuge; but the institution, if they have been admitted, finds them lodgings elsewhere.

Each person admitted receives in the evening half-a-pound of the best bread. Every child has the same allowance. If a woman be admitted with four children, she receives two half-pounds of bread—a half-pound for every one, no matter if one be at the breast, as is not unfrequently the case. The same quantity of bread is given in the mornings. In the night that I was present, 430 were admitted, and consequently (including the evening and morning allowances), 430 lbs. of bread were disposed of. On Sundays, when Divine Service is celebrated by a clergyman of the Church of England, three half-pounds of bread and three ounces of cheese are distributed to each inmate, children and babies

included. I witnessed a number of young men eating the bread administered to them. They took it with a keen appetite; nothing was heard among them but the champing of the teeth, as they chewed large mouthfuls of the food.

The berths, both in the men's and women's wards, are on the ground, and divided one from another only by a wooden partition about a foot high; a similar partition is at the head and feet; so that in all the wards it looks as if there were a series of coffins arranged in long catacombs. This burial-like aspect is the more striking when the inmates are all asleep, as they were, with the rarest exceptions, when I walked round at ten o'clock at night. Each sleeper has for covering a large basil (dressed sheep-skin), such as cobblers use for aprons. As they lie in long rows, in the most profound repose, with these dark brown wrappers about them, they present the uniform look and arrangement of a long line of mummies. Each bed in the coffin, or trough-like division, is made of waterproof cloth, stuffed with hay, made so as to be easily cleaned. It is soft and pleasant to the touch. Formerly the beds were plain straw, but the present plan has been in use for seven years. In this Refuge only three men have died since it was established, thirty years ago. One fell dead at the sink-stone while washing himself; the other two were found dead in their berths during the prevalence of the cholera.

Every part of the building was scrupulously clean. On the first night of the opening, the matron selects from the women who have sought an asylum there, three, who are engaged for the season to do the household work. This is done during the day when the inmates are absent. All must leave by eight in the morning, the doors being open for their departure at five, in case any wish to quit early—as some do for the chance of a job at Covent-garden, Farringdon, or any of the early markets. The three women-helpers receive 7s. a-week each, the half of that sum being paid them in money every Saturday, and the other half being retained and given to each of them, in a round sum, at the closing of the Refuge. The premises in which this accommodation to the houseless is now supplied were formerly a hat manufactory on a large scale; but the lath and plaster of the ceilings, and the partitions, have been removed, so that what was a suite of apartments on one floor is now a long ward. The rafters of the ceilings are minutely whitewashed, as are the upright beams used in the construction of the several rooms before the place was applied to its present charitable end. Those now are in the nature of pillars, and add to the catacomb-like aspect that I have spoken of. In different parts of each ward are very large grates, in which bright fires are kept glowing and crackling; and as these are lighted some time before

the hour of opening, the place has a warmth and cosiness which must be very grateful to those who have encountered the cold air all the day, and perhaps all the night before.

In order to arrive at a correct estimate as to the number of the really poor and houseless who availed themselves of the establishment (to afford nightly shelter to whom the refuge was originally instituted by the benevolent founder, Mr. Hick, the City mace-bearer) I consulted with the superintendent as to the class of persons he found most generally seeking refuge there. These were—among the men—mostly labourers out of work—agricultural, railway, and dock; discharged artisans, chiefly carpenters and painters; sailors, either cast away or without their registry tickets; broken-down tradesmen, clerks, shopmen, and errand-boys, who either through illness or misfortune had been deprived of their situations; and, above all, Irish immigrants, who had been starved out of their own country. These he considered the really deserving portion of the inmates for whom the institution was designed. Among the females, the better and largest class of poor were needlewomen, servants, charwomen, gardenwomen, sellers of laces in the street, and occasionally a beggar-woman. Under his guidance I selected such as appeared the most meritorious among the classes he had enumerated, and now subjoin the statements of a portion of the number.

The first of the houseless that I saw was a railway navigator. He was a fine, stoutly-built fellow, with a fresh-coloured open countenance, and flaxen hair—indeed, altogether a splendid specimen of the Saxon labourer. He was habited in a short blue smockfrock, yellow in parts with clay, and he wore the heavy high lace-up boots, so characteristic of the tribe. These were burst, and almost soleless with long wear.

The poor fellow told the old story of the labourer compelled to squander the earnings at the public-house of his master:—

"I have been a navvy for about eighteen years. The first work that I done was on the Manchester and Liverpool. I was a lad then. I used to grease the railway waggons, and got about 1s. 6d. a-day. There we had a tommy-shop, and we had to go there to get our bit of victuals, and they used to charge us an extra price. The next place I had after that was on the London and Brummagem. There I went as horse-driver, and had 2s. 6d. a-day. Things was dear then, and at the tommy-shop they was much dearer; for there was tommy-shops on every line then; and indeed every contractor and sub-contractor had his shop that he forced his men to deal at, or else he wouldn't have them in his employ. At the tommy-shop we was charged half as much again as we should have had to pay elsewhere; and it's the same now, wherever these tommy-shops is. What the contractors, you see, can't make out of the company, they fleeces out of the men. Well,

sir, I worked on that line through all the different contracts till it was finished: sometimes I was digging, sometimes shovelling. I was mostly at work at open cuttings. All this time I was getting from 2s. 6d. to 3s. and 3s. 6d. a-day; that was the top price; and if I'd had the ready-money to lay out myself, I could have done pretty well, and maybe have put a penny or two by against a rainy day; but the tommy-shop and the lodging-house took it all out of us. You see, the tommy-shop found us in beer, and they would let us drink away all our earnings there if we pleased, and when pay-time came we should have nothing to take. If we didn't eat and drink at the tommy-shop we should have no work. Of an evening, we went to the tommy-shop after the drink, and they'd keep drawing beer for us there as long as we'd have anything coming to us next pay-day (we were paid every fortnight, and sometimes every month), and when we had drunk away all that would be coming to us, why they'd turn us out. The contractor, who keeps these tommy-shops, is generally a gentleman, a man of great property, who takes some four, five, or seven lengths to do. Well, with such goings on, in course there wasn't no chance in the world for us to save a halfpenny. We had a sick fund among ourselves, but our masters never cared nothing about us further than what they could get out of us at their tommy-shops. They were never satisfied if a man didn't spend all his money with them; if we had a penny to take at the month's end, they didn't like it; and now the half of us has to walk about and starve, or beg, or go to the union. After I left the Brummagem line, I went on to the Great Western. I went to work at Maidenhead. There it was on the same system, and on the same rules—the poor man being fleeced and made drunk by his master. Sometimes the contractor would lot the work out to some sub-contractor, and he, after the men had worked for a month, would run away, and we should never see the colour of his money. After the Great Western, I went into Lancashire, on the Manchester and Oldham branch. I started there to work at nights, and there I worked a month for the contractors, when they went bankrupt, and we never received a farthing but what we had got out of the tommy-shop. Well, I came away from there, and got on to the London and Brighton, and I worked all up and down that, saving the tunnels; and it was the same there—the tommy-shop and imposition was wherever we went. Well, from there I went on to the London and Dover. It was monthly payments on that. There, too, I worked for a month, when the sub-contractor runned away with all the men's money—900l., sir, it were calculated. After that another party took it, and it was the same all the way up and down—the tommy-shop and beer as much as we liked, on credit. Then I went on to the London and Cambridge, and there it

was the same story over and over again. Just about this time, railway work began to get slack, and then farmers' work was slack too; and you see that made things worse for the navvies, for all came to look for employment on the railroads. This is about seven years ago. After that some more fresh lines started throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire, and trade being bad in them parts, all the weavers applied for work on the railways, and the regular navvies had a hard time of it then. But we managed to get on somehow—kept lingering on—till about three years ago, when trade got a little bit better. That was about the time when things was very dear, and our wages was rose to 3s. 6d. a-day: they'd been only 2s. 6d. and 3s. before that; and we did much better when our pay was increased, because we had the ready-money then, and there was no tommy-shops that summer, for the company wouldn't have them on that line. At the end of that year the work was all stopped, on account of the Chartist rising, and then there was hundreds of men walking about begging their bread from door to door, with nothing to do. After this, (that's two years ago, the back end of this year,) I went to work on the London and York. Here we had only 2s. 9d. a-day, and we had only four days' work in the week to do besides; and then there was a tommy-shop, where we were forced to get our victuals and drink: so you see we were very bad off then. I stopped on this line (for work was very scarce, and I thought myself lucky to have any) till last spring. Then all the work on it stopped, and I dare say 2000 men were thrown out of employ in one day. They were all starving, the heap of them, or next door to it. I went away from there over to the Brummagem and Beechley branch line. But there I found things almost as bad as what I left before. Big, strong, able-bodied men were working for 1s. 8d. a-day, and from that to 2s.: that was the top price; for wages had come down, you see, about one-half, and little or no work to do at that price; and tommy-shop and beer, sir, as before, out of the little we did get. The great cause of our wages being cut down was through the work being so slack in the country; everybody was flocking to them parts for employment, and the contractors, seeing a quantity of men walking backwards and forwards, dropped the wages: if one man wouldn't work at the price, there was hundreds ready to do it. Besides, provisions was very cheap, and the contractors knew we could live on less, and do their work quite as well. Whenever provisions goes down our wages does, too; but when they goes up, the contractors is very slow in rising them. You see, when they find so many men walking about without work, the masters have got the chance of the poor man. Three year ago this last winter—I think it was '46—provisions was high and wages was good; and in the summer of the very same year, food got

cheap again, and our wages dropped from 3s. 6d. to 3s. and 2s. 9d. The fall in our wages took place immediately the food got cheaper. The contractors said, as we could live for less, we must do the work for less. I left the Brummagem and Beechley line, about two months before the Christmas before last, and then I came to Copenhagen-fields, on the London and York—the London end, sir; and there I was till last March, when we were all paid off, about 600 on us; and I went back to Barnet, and there I worked till the last seven weeks, and had 2s. 9d. a-day for what, four years ago, I had 3s. 6d. for; and I could only have three or four days' work in the week then. Whilst I was there, I hurted my leg, and was laid up a month. I lived all that time on charity; on what the chaps would come and give me. One would give a shilling, another sixpence, another a shilling, just as they could spare it; and poorly they could do that, God knows! I couldn't declare on to the sick fund, because I hadn't no bones broken. Well, when I come to look for work, and that's three weeks ago, when I could get about again, the work was all stopped, and I couldn't get none to do. Then I come to London, and I've looked all about for a job, and I can't find nothing to do. I went to a lodging-house in the Borough, and I sold all my things—shovel and grafting-tool and all, to have a meal of food. When all my things was gone, I didn't know where to go. One of my mates told me of this Refuge, and I have been here two nights. All that I have had to eat since then is the bread night and morning they gives us here. This will be the last night I shall have to stop here, and after that I don't know what I shall do. There's no railway work—that is, there's none to speak of, seeing the thousands of men that's walking about with nothing to do, and not knowing where to lay their heads. If I could get any interest, I should like to go away as an emigrant. I shouldn't like to be sent out of my native country as a rogue and a vagabone; but I'm tired of stopping here, and if I can't get away, why I must go home and go to the parish, and it's hard for a young man that's willing and able like me to work, and be forced to want because he can't get it. I know there is thousands—thousands, sir, like I am—I know there is, in the very same condition as I am at this moment: yes, I know there is." [This he said with very great feeling and emphasis.] "We are all starving. We are all willing to work, but it ain't to be had. This country is getting very bad for labour; it's so overrun with Irish that the Englishman hasn't a chance in his own land to live. Ever since I was nine years old I've got my own living, but now I'm dead beat, though I'm only twenty-eight next August."

The next man to whom I spoke was tall and hale-looking, except that his features were pinched, and his eyes had a dull lack-lustre

look, common to men suffering from cold and hunger. His dress was a coarse jacket, fustian trousers, and coarse, hard-worn shoes. He spoke without any very provincial accent.

"I am now forty-eight, and have been a farm-labourer all my life. I am a single man. When I was a boy of twelve, I was put to dig, or see after the birds, or break clods, or anything, on a farm at Croland, in Lancashire. I had very little school before that, and can neither read nor write. I was then living with my parents, poor people, who worked on the land whenever they could get a day's work. We had to live very hard, but at hay and harvest times we had meat, and lived better. I had 3s. a-week as a boy. When I grew up to fourteen I left home. I thought my father didn't use me well: perhaps it was my own fault. I might have been a bad boy; but he was severe when he did begin with me, though he was generally quiet. When his passion was up, there was no bearing it. Anyhow, I started into the world at fourteen to do the best I could for myself—to make my fortune if I could. Since then, I have had work in all sorts of counties; Midland counties, principally. When a boy, I got employment readily enough at bird-scaring, or hay-making; but I soon grew up, and took a man's place very early, and I could then do any kind of farmer's work, except ploughing or seeding. They have men on purpose for that. Farm work was far better in my younger days than it is now. For a week, when hired by the day, I never get more than 15s., regular work. For taken work (by the job), I have made as much as 42s. in a week; that is, in reaping and mowing, when I could drop on such jobs in a difficult season, when the weather was uncertain. I talk of good times. The last good job I had was three years ago, come next summer. Now I should be glad to get 9s. a-week, constant work: anything but what I'm doing now. As I went about from place to place, working for farmers, I generally lodged at the shepherds' houses, or at some labourer's. I never was in a lodging-house when I was in work, only when money runs low one must have shelter. At some lodging-houses I've had a good feather-bed; others of them are bad enough: the best, I think, are in Norfolk. I have saved a bit of money several times—indeed, year after year, until the last three or four years; but what I saved in the summer, went in the winter. In some summers, I could save nothing. It's how the season comes. I never cared for drink. I've done middling till these last two seasons. My health was good, to be sure; but when a man's in health his appetite is good also; and when I'm at regular work I don't eat half so much as when I'm knocking about idle, and get hold of a meal. I often have to make up for three or four days then. The last job I had was six weeks before Christmas, at Boston, in Lincolnshire. I couldn't make 1s. 6d. a-day

on account of the weather. I had 13s., however, to start with, and I went on the road, not standing for a straight road, but going where I heard there was a chance of a job, up or down anywhere, here or there, but there was always the same answer, 'Nobody wanted—no work for their own constant men.' I was so beat out as soon as my money was done—and it lasted ten days—that I parted with my things one by one. First my waistcoat, then my stockings (three pair of them), then three shirts. I got 2s. 4d. for three shirts, and 6d. a pair for my stockings. My clothes were done, and I parted with my pocket-knife for 2d., and with my 'bacco-box for 1d. After I left Boston, I got into Leicestershire, and was at Cambridge, and Wisbeach, and Lynn, and Norwich; and I heard of a job among brickmakers at Low Eastthrop, in Suffolk, but it was no go. The weather was against it, too. It was when the snow set in. And then I thought I would come to London, as God in his goodness might send me something to do. I never meant anything slinking. I'm only happy when I'm at work, but here I am destitute. Some days as I walked up I had nothing to eat. At others I got half-pennies or pennies from men like myself that I saw at work. I've given shillings away that way myself at times. Sometimes I had to take to the road, but I'm a very poor beggar. When I got to London I was a stranger, and lodged here the first night—that's a week ago. A policeman sent me here. I've tried every day to get work—labouring-work for builders, or about manure-carts, or anything like that, as there's no farming in London, but got none; so but for this place I had starved. When this place is closed I must tramp into the country. There are very many farm-labourers now going from farm to farm, and town to town, to seek work, more than ever I saw before. I don't know that the regular farm-workmen come so much to London. As I travelled up from Suffolk I lay rough often enough. I got into stables, or any places. Such places as this save many a man's life. It's saved mine, for I might have been found dead in the street, as I didn't know where to go."

This man appeared to me to be a very decent character.

The large number of Irish found among the inmates of these establishments is one of the peculiar features of the Refuges. By the returns above given, it will be seen that they constitute more than one-half of the total applicants. Such being the fact, I selected two from the more decent, as types of the better class of immigrants, and subjoin their narratives.

One of these men had a half-shrewd, half-stolid look, and was clad in very dirty fustian. His beard was some days old, and he looked ill-fed and wretched. His children—for he had two boys with him, ten and twelve years

old—were shoeless, their white skins being a contrast to their dirty dress, as the former appeared through the holes in their jackets. They looked on with a sort of vacant wonder, motionless, and without a word. The father said:—

"I've been knocking about in England these four years from place to place. I'm telling you the truth, sir. [This he often repeated.] I came here to better myself, to knock out something better; but I wish to God I'd been buried before I buried my wife and children. I do, indeed, sir. I was a labourer in Ireland, working in farms and gardens for anybody. My wages warn't much, only 3s. a-week, and my datal house (that is, a house rent-free), and two meals of victuals a-day, sometimes 'taties and milk for meals, and sometimes 'taties and fish, and sometimes—aye, often—'taties and nothing. My wife and me, and four children, came from Cork—it was in the county Cork I lived—to Wales. I don't know the name of the part; they've such queer names there; sure, then, they have, sir. It cost me half-a-crown a-piece for the six of us. I raised the money partly by digging up a garden I had, and selling what stuff there was, and the rest was made up by the farmers in the neighbourhood giving their 3d. or 6d. a-piece to me, so that I might lave. I wasn't on the poor-law rate, but I soon might. When I got to Wales, I had only 6d. left. I went to the workhouse for a night's lodging, to be sure—what else? I started next day for London with my wife and children, begging as we came, and going from workhouse to workhouse; and very badly we got along. It finished a fortnight to get to London. When we got to London (that's about four years ago) we got work at peas-picking, my wife and me, in the gardens about. That is for the summer. In the winter we sold oranges in the streets while she lived, and we had nothing from the parishes. I can't complain of the living till this time, sir; it was better than I knew in Ireland. I don't know what we got, she managed all. Last autumn we went into the hop county, to Ellis's farm. I don't know the town nearest; and there my wife and two children died of the cholera at the farm. The three of them warn't a week ill. The parish kept them and buried them. Since that I've been worse off than ever, and will always be worse off than ever, for I've lost a good wife. Since her death I jobbed about in the country, living very bare, me and the children, till the frost came, and then we came to London. I was knocking about for a fortnight, and begged a little; but sorrow a much I got by that. How did I know of this place? Musha, all the neighbours know about it."

The younger man, who was tall and gaunt, more intelligent than the other, and less squalid in his appearance, said:—
"I have been in England two years in

August. I came to better my living. I tilled a portion of land in Ireland. It was 30l. a-year rent, and forty acres. That was in the county Cork, parish of Kilmeen. I rented the land of a middleman, and he was very severe. My family and I couldn't live under him. I had a wife and three children. We all came to England, from Cork to Bristol. I kept a little substance back to pay my way to England. The voyage cost 25s. From Bristol I went to Cardiff, as I got no work at Bristol. At Cardiff I worked on the railway at 2s. 6d. a-day. I did well for a couple of months. I would like to continue at that, or at 1s. a-day here, better than in Ireland these times. I worked in Cardiff town with a bricklayer, after I'd done on the railway, at 12s. a-week. I next year had a twelvemonth's work, on and off, with a farmer near Bristol, at 10s. a-week, and was still plenty comfortable. I made for London at the hay-harvest. I had a little money to start with, but I got no hay-work, only a trifle of work at the Docks. In corn-harvest, near Brighton, I worked for six weeks, making 10s. an acre for cutting wheat by piece-work, and 7s. for oats, and 2s. for any day's work. I made 4l. altogether. I got back to London with 40s. I could get no work at all, but five days' work at a stone-yard, at 1s. a-day. I sold a few things in the streets, oranges and apples; so did my wife. It helped to keep us. All was gone at last, so I got in here with one child (a fine boy). My wife's got three with her. She's in a lodging in Gray's-inn-lane. She's starving, I'm afraid; but she wished me to come in here with the child, as I could do nothing at night-time. I don't know how many came over about the time I did. The gentry give poor men money, or did give it to them, to send them over here, to free the land from its expenses."

To complete the picture of this Irish destitution, I add the following.

One wretched creature had come to the Refuge with her four children. She herself was habited in a large blue cloth cloak, her toes were through the end of her shoes, and her gown clung tight to her limbs, telling that she was utterly destitute of under-clothing. In her arms she carried an infant, round which were wound some old woollen rags. As the little thing sucked at its mother's breast, it breathed so hard that it needed no words to tell of its long exposure to the cold. Though the mother was half-clad, still there was the little bit of clean net inside the old rusty straw bonnet. The children were respectively eleven, six, and three years old. The eldest (a good-looking grey-eyed girl, who stood with her forefinger in her mouth, half simple) was covered with a tattered plaid shawl. This, at her mother's bidding, she drew from her shoulder with an ostentation of poverty, to show that what had before appeared a gown beneath was nothing more than a bombazine petticoat. On her feet were a pair of women's

old fashionable shoes, tied on with string. These had been given in charity to her by a servant a week back. The next child—a boy—laughed as I looked at him, and seemed, though only six years old, to have been made prematurely “knowing” by his early street education. He put out his foot as he saw my eye glance downward to his shoes, to show me that he had one boot and one shoe on. He was clad in all kinds of rags, and held in his hand a faded velvet cap. The youngest boy was almost a dwarf. He was three years old, but so stunted that he seemed scarce half that age.

“I come from the county of Corruk, the worst and the poorest part of it—yes, indeed, sir, it is,” said the woman; “and the gintlemen know that I do. When I had it to do, I manufactured at flax and wool. I knit and sewed, to be sure I did; but God Almighty was plazed to deprive me of it. It was there I was married. My husband was a miner. Distress and want, and hunger and poverty—nothing else—druv us to this counthry. It was the will of God—glory be to his holy and blessed name!—to fail the ‘taties. To be sure, I couldn’t dig one out of the ground not fit to ate. We lived on ‘taties, and milk, and fish, and eggs. We used to have hins then. And the mining failed, too; and the captains came over here. Yes, to be sure; for here they lived, sir. Yes, sir, indeed; and I could tell you that I used to be eight days—yes, that I did—before I could get one ha’porth to ate—barring the wather I boiled and drank to keep the life in myself and children. It was Doctor O’Donovan that paid for our passage. When he see all the hunger, and distress, and want—yes, indeed, sir—that I went through, he gave a lettther to the stame-packet office, and then they brought me and my three childer over. It was here that this baby was borrun. My husband was here before me, he was, about seven or eight months. He hadn’t sent me any money, for he couldn’t a penny. He wrote home to see if I lived, for he didn’t think I lived; and then I showed the lettther to Dr. O’Donovan. My husband niver got a day’s work since he came over; indeed, he couldn’t give the childer their breakfast the next morning after they came. I came to London-bridge, and met my husband there. Well, indeed, that is nearly three years ago. Oh, thin, I had nothing to do since but what little we done at the harvest. It was tin weeks before Christmas that I came over, and I don’t know what month it was, for I don’t read or write, you know. Oh, thin, indeed, we had to live by begging from that up to harvest time. I had to beg for him sooner than let him die with the hunger. He didn’t do any work, but he’d be glad of a sixpence he’d earn. He’d rather have it that way than he’d begged tin pound—it would be more plisure. Never a day’s work could he get; and many beside him. Oh, Lord, there is

many, sir. He never does anything but at the harvest-time, and then he works at raping the corrun. I know nothing else that he does; and I bind the shaves afther him. Why, indeed, we get work than for about a fortnight or three weeks—it don’t howld a month. Oh no, sir, no; how could my children do anything, but as fast as we’d earn it to ate it? I declare I don’t know how much we’d make a week then. They got only eight shillings an acre last year for it. I declare I don’t know what we made; but whatever we had, we hadn’t two shillings laving it. Ah, indeed, I had to beg all the rest of my time. My husband doesn’t beg—I’ll tell you the thruth. The thruth is the best. When he has e’er a penny, he tries to sell a handful of oranges; and, indeed, he had to lave off silling, for he couldn’t buy half a hundred of ‘em to sill back. He done pritty well when the onions were in season, he did, sir; but there’s so many silling oranges, he can’t sill one of ‘em. Now he does nothing, for he has nothing to reach half a hundred of limons with, and that isn’t much. When I gets a pinny to pay for the lodgings, then we lodges and sleeps together; but when I can’t, I must go about this way with my children. When I go out begging, he remains at home in the lodging-house; he has nothing else to do, sir. I always go out with my childer; sure I couldn’t look at ‘em die with hunger. Where’s the use of laving them with the husband; what has he to give them? Indeed, if I had left them last night with him, he couldn’t have give them as much as they’d put in their mouths onced. Indeed, I take them out in the cowlid to big with me to get a bit of victuals for ‘em. Sure God knows I can’t hilp it—he knows I can’t—glory be to his holy name! Indeed, I have a part of the brid I got here last night to carry to my poor husband, for I know he wanted it. Oh, if I’m to go to the gallows, I’m telling you the thruth. Oh, to be sure, yes, sir; there’s many a one would give a bit to the childer when they wouldn’t to me—sure the world knows that; and maybe the childer will get ha’pence, and that will pay my lodging or buy a loaf of brid for ‘em. Oh, sir, to be sure, you know I’d get more with all my little childer out than I would with one, and that’s the rason indeed. Yes, indeed, that’s why I take them out! Oh, then, that’s what you want to know! Why, there’s some people wouldn’t believe I’d have so many. Maybe, some days I wouldn’t get a pinny, and maybe I’d git a shilling. I met a gintleman the other day that gave me a shilling together. I’d all my childer out with me then. The sister carries the little fellow on her back, no more would he stop afther me nayther. Only twice I’ve left him at home. Oh thin, indeed, he do cry with the cowlid, and often again with the hunger; and some of the people says to me it’s myself that makes him cry; but thin, indeed, it ain’t. Maybe I’ve no home to give my

husband, maybe it’s at some union he slept last night. My husband niver goes bigging, he didn’t, sir—I won’t tell a lie—he didn’t, indeed; but he sinds me out in the cowlid, and in the wit, and in the hate, too: but thin he can’t help it. He’s the best man that iver put a hat on his hid, and the kindest.”

She persisted in asseverating this, being apparently totally incapable of perceiving the inhumanity of her husband’s conduct.

“He don’t force me—he don’t, indeed—but he sits idle at home while I go out. Ah, if you knew what I suffers! Oh, yes, he’d rather work, if I’d got a guinea in gowld for him to-night; and yesterday morning he prayed to God Almighty to put something in his way to give him a day’s work. I was in prison onced for bigging. My children was taken away from me, and sint to some union. I don’t know the name of it. That was the time my husband was silling the limons. He niver came to spake for me when I was going to prison, and he doesn’t know whether I’m in prisin to-night. Ah, I beg your honour’s pardon, he would care, but he can’t help me. I thought I’d ind my life in the prisin, for I wouldn’t be allowed to spake a word. The poor man, my husband, can’t help it. He was niver counted lazy in his counthry; but God Almighty plazed to deprive him of his work, and what can he do?”

The next was a rather tall and well-spoken woman of fifty-eight.

“When I was young,” she said, “I used to go out to day’s works, or charing, and sometimes as a laundress. I went charing till five years ago, sometimes doing middling, often very badly, when I burst a blood-vessel in lifting a weight—a pail of water to fill a copper. I fell down all at once, and bled at the ears and nose. I was taken to St. Bartholomew’s, and was there four months. When I came out, I took to sell things in the street. I could do nothing else. I have no friends in London—none in the world. Sometimes I picked up a living by selling laces, and iron-holders, and memorandum-books, in the City. I made the memorandum-books myself—penny books. The pincushions I made myself. I never had anything from my parish, or rather my husband’s—that’s Bristol. He was a bricklayer, but I chared when he was out of work. He died eighteen years ago. I was known by ladies and others in the City, who would sometimes give me a sixpence for a lace. I was working two months back—it was the general thanksgiving-day—when I was working at a fishmonger’s in Gresham-street, and fell down the cellar stairs and broke my arm. I was again three weeks in Bartholomew’s hospital. I have been destitute ever since. I have made away with everything. A little quilt is all I have left, and that would have gone last night if I hadn’t got in here.”

The poor woman whom I next accosted was a widow (her husband having died only a few

months before). She had altogether what I may call a faded look; even her widow’s cap was limp and flat, and her look was miserably subdued. She said:—

“My husband was a journeyman shoemaker. Sometimes he would earn 20s. a-week; but we were badly off, for he drank; but he did not ill-use me—not much. During his last illness we raised 5l. on a raffle for a silk handkerchief among the shoemakers, and 10s. from the Mendicity Society, and a few shillings from the clergyman of the parish. The trade buried him. I didn’t get 1s. as his widow—only 5l. to bury him; but there was arrears of rent to pay, and about a month after his death I hadn’t a farthing, and I took the cholera, and was eight days in St. Bartholomew’s, the parish officers sending me there in a cab. I lived in furnished lodgings before that, and had nothing to call my own, when I had pawned my black for my husband. When I got out I helped a neighbour at shoe-binding. One time I have earned 15s. a-week at shoe-binding for —, Regent-street. Now I can only earn 5s. with full work. I have seldom earned 3s. of late weeks. I had to leave my neighbour, because I felt that I was a burden, and was imposing upon her. I then had a shelter with a young woman I once lodged with, but I couldn’t stay there any longer. She was poor, and had nothing for me to do. So, on Saturday last, I had no work, no money, no friends, and I thought I would try and get in here, as another poor woman had done. Here I’ve had a shelter.”

A pretty, pleasant-spoken young woman, very tidy in her poor attire, which was an old cloak wrapped close round her, to cover her scanty dress, gave me the following statement very modestly:—

“I am twenty-two; my mother died six years ago; my father I never knew, for I’m an unlawful child. My mother had a small income from my father, and kept me at school. I can’t even guess who my father was. I am an only child. I was taken from school to wait upon my mother; very kind indeed she was to me, but she died in three weeks after I came from school. She’d been in a consumption for six years; she fretted sadly about me. She never told me I was an unlawful child. My aunt, my mother’s sister, told me one day afterwards. My mother always said my father lived in the country. I loved my mother, so I seldom spoke of my father, for she would say, ‘I don’t wish to hear about him.’ There was nothing for me at my mother’s death, so I put myself to learn fancy-box-making for grocers and pastrycooks, for their sweetmeats, and for scents. My aunt assisted me. She is now poor, and a widow. I could never earn more than 3s. or 4s. a-week at box-making, the pay is so bad. I lived this way for four or five years, lodging with my aunt, and giving her all I earned, and she kept me for it. I then went to learn the

Macintosh-coat-making. I went into lodgings, my aunt being unable to help me any longer, as at my uncle's death she could only keep a room for herself and children. She makes pill-boxes. I could earn at the Macintoshes only 4s. a-week and my tea, when in full work, and when work was bad, I earned only 2s. 6d. It was 8d. a-day and my tea. I parted with a good box of clothes to keep myself; first one bit of dress went, and another. I was exposed to many a temptation, but I have kept my character, I am happy to say. On Monday night I was in the streets all night—I hardly knew in what part, I was so miserable—having no place to put my head in, and frightened to death almost. I couldn't pay my lodgings, and so lost them—I was locked out. I went to the station-house, and asked to sit there for a shelter, but the policeman said it was no place for me, as I was not guilty of any offence; they could do nothing for me: they were all very civil. I walked the streets all that cold night; I feel the cold of that night in my limbs still. I thought it never would be over. I wasn't exposed to any insults. I had to walk about all Tuesday, without a bite either Monday or Tuesday. On Tuesday evening I got admitted into this place, and was very thankful. Next day I tried for work, but got none. I had a cup of tea from my aunt to live on that day."

This girl wished to get into the parish, in order to be sent out as an emigrant, or anything of that kind; but her illegitimacy was a bar, as no settlement could be proved.

It was not difficult to see, by the looks of the poor woman whom I next addressed, the distress and privation she had endured. Her eyes were full of tears, and there was a plaintiveness in her voice that was most touching. She was clad in rusty black, and had on a black straw bonnet with a few old crape flowers in it; but still, in all her poverty, there was a neatness in her appearance that told she was much unused to such abject misery as had now come upon her. Hers was, indeed, a wretched story—the victim of her husband's ill-treatment and neglect:—"I have been working at needlework ever since the end of August. My husband is living; but he has deserted me, and I don't know where he is at present. He had been a gentleman's servant, but he could attend to a garden, and of late years he had done so. I have been married nine years next April. I never did live happily with him. He drank a very great deal, and when tipsy he used to beat me sorely. He had been out of work for a long time before he got his last situation, and there he had 18s. a-week. He lost his place before that through drink. Oh, sir, perhaps he'd give me all his money at the end of the week within three shillings; but then he'd have more than half of it back again—not every week alike, of course, but that was mostly the case—and in particular,

for the last year and a half, for since then he had been worse. While he was with me I have gone out for a day's charring occasionally, but then I found I was no for'arder at the week's end, and so I didn't strive so much as I might have done, for if I earned two shillings he'd be sure to have it from me. I was a servant, before he married me, in a respectable tradesman's family. I lived three years and a half at my master's house out of town, and that was where I fell in with my husband. He was a shopman then. I lived with him more than eight years, and always acted a wife's part to him. I never drank myself, and was never untrue to him; but he has been too untrue to me, and I have had to suffer for it. I bore all his unkindness until August last, when he treated me so badly. I cannot mention to you how—but he deceived me and injured me in the worst possible manner. I have one child, a boy, seven years old last September; but this boy is with him, and I don't know where. I have striven to find him out, but cannot. When I found out how he had deceived me we had words, and he then swore he wouldn't come home any more to me, and he has kept to his oath, for I haven't set eyes on him since. My boy was down at a friend's house at Cambridge, and they gave him up to the father without my knowledge. When he went away I had no money in the house. Nothing but a few things—tables, and chairs, and a bed in a room. I kept them as long as I could, but at last they went to find me in food. After he had gone I got a bit of needle-work. I worked at the dress-making and several different kinds of work since he left me. Then I used to earn about five shillings a-week; sometimes not so much. Sometimes I have made only two shillings, and lately—that is, within the last six weeks—I have earned scarcely anything. About October last I was obliged to sell my things to pay off my rent and get myself something to eat. After that I went to lodge with a person, and there I stopped till very lately, when I had scarce nothing, and couldn't afford to pay my rent. Then I was turned out of there, and I went and made shift with a friend by lying down on the boards, beside her children. I lay down with my clothes on. I had nothing to cover me, and no bed under me. They was very poor people. At last my friend and her husband didn't like to have people about in the room where they slept; and besides, I was so poor I was obliged to beg a bit of what they had, and they was so poor they couldn't afford to spare it to me. They were very good and kind to me so long as they could hold out anyhow, but at last I was obliged to leave, and walk about the streets. This I did for two whole nights—last Sunday and Monday nights. It was bitter cold, and freezing sharp. I did go and sit on the stairs of a lodging-house on Monday night, till I was

that cold I could scarcely move a limb. On Tuesday night I slept in the Borough. A lady in the street gave me threepence. I asked her if she could give me a ticket to go anywhere. I told her I was in the deepest distress, and she gave me all the halfpence she had, and I thought I would go and have a night's lodging with the money. All these three days and nights I had only a piece of bread to keep down my hunger. Yesterday I was walking about these parts, and I see a lot of people standing about here, and I asked them if there was anything being given away. They told me it was the Refuge, or else I shouldn't have known there was such a place. Had I been aware of it, I shouldn't have been out in the streets all night as I was on Sunday and Monday. When I leave here (and they'll only keep me for three nights) I don't know what I shall do, for I have so parted with my things that I ain't respectable enough to go after needlework, and they do look at you so. My clothes are all gone to live upon. If I could make myself look a little decent, I might perhaps get some work. I wish I could get into service again. I wish I'd never left it, indeed: but I want things. If I can't get any things, I must try in such as I have got on: and if I can't get work, I shall be obliged to see if the parish will do anything for me; but I'm afraid they won't. I am thirty-three years old, and very miserable indeed."

From the opening of the Refuges for the Houseless in 1820, until 1852, as many as 189,223 homeless individuals received "nightly shelter" there, being an average of upwards of 6000 a-year. Some of these have remained three or four nights in the same establishment; so that, altogether, no less than 1,141,558 nights' lodgings were afforded to the very poor, and 2,778,153 lbs., or nearly 25,000 cwt. of bread distributed among them.

ASYLUM FOR THE HOUSELESS POOR.

THERE is a world of wisdom to be learnt at the Asylum for the Houseless Poor. Those who wish to be taught in this, the severest school of all, should pay a visit to Playhouse-yard, and see the homeless crowds gathered about the Asylum, waiting for the first opening of the doors, with their bare feet, blue and ulcerous with the cold, resting for hours on the ice and snow in the streets, and the bleak stinging wind blowing through their rags. To hear the cries of the hungry, shivering children, and the wrangling of the greedy men, scrambling for a bed and a pound of dry bread, is a thing to haunt one for life. There are 400 and odd creatures utterly destitute—mothers with infants at their breasts—fathers with boys holding by their side—the friendless—the penniless—the shirtless, shoeless, breadless, homeless; in a word, the very poorest of this the very richest city in the world.

The Asylum for the Houseless is the con-

fluence of the many tides of poverty that, at this period of the year, flow towards the metropolis. It should be remembered that there are certain callings, which yield a subsistence to those who pursue them only at particular seasons. Brickmakers, agricultural labourers, garden-women, and many such vocations, are labours that admit of being performed only in the summer, when, indeed, the labourer has the fewest wants to satisfy. The privations of such classes, then, come at a period when even the elements conspire to make their destitution more terrible. Hence, restless with want, they wander in hordes across the land, making, in vain hope, for London, as the great emporium of wealth—the market of the world. But London is as overstocked with hands as every other nook and corner of the country. And then the poor creatures, far away from home and friends, find at last to their cost, that the very privations they were flying from pursue them here with a tenfold severity. I do not pretend to say that all found within the walls of these asylums are such as I have described; many, I know, trade upon the sympathy of those who would ease the sufferings of the destitute labourers, and they make their appearance in the metropolis at this especial season. Winter is the beggar's harvest. That there are hundreds of professional vagabonds drawn to London at such a time, I am well aware; but with them come the unemployed workmen. We must not, therefore, confound one with the other, nor let our indignation at the vagabond who will not work, check our commiseration for the labourer or artisan who cannot get work to do.

The table on the following page, which has been made up with considerable care and no little trouble, shows the number of persons from different counties sheltered at the Asylum for the Houseless Poor in the Metropolis for fourteen years.

A homeless painter gave me the following statement. His appearance presented nothing remarkable. It was merely that of the poor artisan. There was nothing dirty or squalid about him:—

"I was brought up a painter," he said, "and I am now 27. I served my apprenticeship in Yorkshire, and stayed two years after my term was out with the same master. I then worked in Liverpool, earning but little through illness, and working on and off as my health permitted. I got married in Liverpool, and went with my wife to Londonderry, in Ireland, of which place she was a native. There she died of the cholera in 1847. I was very ill with diarrhoea myself. We lived with her friends, but I got work, though wages are very low there. I never earned more than 2s. 6d. a-day there. I have earned 5s. 6d. a-day in Liverpool, but in Londonderry provisions are very cheap—the best meat at 4d. a-pound. It was an advantage to me being

the Asylum eight nights. Before that, I was out in the streets for five nights together. They were very cold nights; yes, *very*." [The man shivered at the recollection.] "I walked up one street, and down another. I sometimes got under a doorway, but it was impossible to stand still long, it was so cruel cold. The sleet was coming down one night, and froze on my clothes as it fell. The cold made me stiff more than sleepy. It was next day that I felt tired; and then, if I came to sit down at a fireside, I should drop asleep in a minute. I tried, when I was dead-beat, to get into St. Giles's union, but they wouldn't admit me. Then the police sent me up to another union: I forget the name, but they refused me. I tried at Lambeth, and there I was refused. I don't think I went a day without some small bit of bread. I begged for it. But when I walked from St. Alban's to London, I was two days without a bit to put in my mouth. I never stole, not a particle, from any person, in all my trials. I was brought up honest, and, thank God, I have kept so all my life. I would work willingly, and am quite capable: yes, and I would do my work with all my heart, but it's not to be got at."

This the poor fellow said with deep emotion; and, indeed, his whole statement appeared in every way worthy of credit. I heard afterwards that he had offered to "put up the stairs of two houses" at some man's own terms, rather than remain unemployed. He had told the master that his tools were in pawn, and promised, if they were taken out of pledge for him, to work for his bare food. He was a native of Somerset, and his father and mother were both dead.

I then took the statement of a seaman, but one who, from destitution, had lost all the distinguishing characteristics of a sailor's dress of the better description. He wore a jacket, such as seamen sometimes work in, too little for him, and very thin and worn; a waistcoat, once black; a cotton shirt; and a pair of canvas trousers. He had an intelligent look enough, and spoke in a straightforward manner. He stated:—"I am now thirty-five, and have been a seaman all my life. I first went to sea, as a cabin-boy, at Portsmouth. I was left an orphan at fourteen months, and don't know that I have a single relation but myself. I don't know what my father was. I was brought up at the Portsea workhouse. I was taught to read and write. I went to sea in 1827. I have continued a seaman ever since—sometimes doing pretty well. The largest sum I ever had in my possession was 38*l.* when I was in the Portuguese service, under Admiral Sartorius, in the 'Donna Maria' frigate. He hadn't his flag aboard, but he commanded the fleet, such as it was; but don't call it a fleet, say a squadron. Captain Henry was my last captain there; and after him I served under Admiral Napier; he was admiral out there, with his

flag in the 'Real,' until Don Miguel's ships were taken. The frigate I was in, (the 'Donna Maria,') took the 'Princessa Real;' she was a 44-gun ship, and ours was a 36. It was a stiffish thing while it lasted, was the fight; but we boarded and carried the 'Princessa.' I never got all my prize-money. I stopped in Lisbon some time after the fight; and then, as I couldn't meet with a passage to England, I took service on board the 'Donegal,' 74 guns, Captain Fanshawe. I liked Lisbon pretty well; they're not a very tidy people—treacherous, too, but not all of them. I picked up a very little Portuguese. Most of my thirty-eight pounds went in Lisbon. The 'Donegal' brought Don Carlos over, and we were paid off in Plymouth; that was in 1834. Since then I have been in the merchant service. I like that best. My last voyage was in the 'Richard Cobden,' a barque of 380 tons, belonging to Dundee; but she sailed from Gloucester for Archangel, and back from Archangel to Dundee, with a cargo of hemp and codilla. We were paid off in Dundee, and I received 4*l.* 8*s.* on the 13th of October." [He showed me his discharge from the 'Richard Cobden,' and his register ticket.] "I went to Glasgow and got a vessel there, an American, the 'Union;' and before that I stayed at a lodging-house in Dundee that sailors frequent. There was a shipmate of mine there, a carpenter, and I left my things in his charge, and I went on board the 'Union' at Glasgow, and stayed working on board eighteen days; she was short of men. The agreement between me and my old shipmate was, that he should send my things when I required them. My clothes were worth to me more than 5*l.* The ship was to sail on Friday, the 15th of November. Sailors don't mind getting under weigh on a Friday now; and I got 10*s.* from the skipper to take me to Dundee on Thursday, the 14th; but when I got to Dundee for my clothes, I found that the carpenter had left a fortnight before, taking all my things with him. I couldn't learn anything as to where he had gone. One man told me he thought he had gone to Derry, where some said he had a wife. The skipper paid me for what days I had been employed, and offered to let me work a passage to New York, but not on wages; because I had no clothes, he couldn't take me. I tried every ship in the Broomilaw, but couldn't get a job, nor a passage to London; so me and two other seamen set off to walk to London. I started with 3*s.* One seaman left us at Carlisle. We didn't live on the way—we starved. It took us a month to get to London. We slept sometimes at the unions; some wouldn't admit us. I was very lame at last. We reached London a month ago. I got three days' work as a rigger, at 2*s.* 6*d.* a-day, and a week's shelter in the Sailors' Asylum. I had five days' work also on stevedore's work in the 'Margaret West,' gone to Batavia. That brought me 12*s.*

those five days' work. Since that I've done nothing, and was so beat out that I had to pass two days and nights in the streets. One of those days I had a bit of bread and meat from an old mate. I had far rather be out in a gale of wind at sea, or face the worst storm, than be out two such nights again in such weather, and with an empty belly. My mate and I kept on trying to get a ship, but my old jacket was all against me. They look at a man's clothes now. I passed these two nights walking about Tower-hill, and to London-bridge and back, half dead, and half asleep, with cold and hunger. I thought of doing something to get locked up, but I then thought that would be no use, and a disgrace to a man, so I determined to bear it like a man, and try to get a ship. The man who left us at Carlisle did no better than me, for he's here too, beat out like me, and he told me of this Asylum. The other man got a ship. I'm not a drinking man, though I may have had a spree or two, but that's all over. I could soon get a ship if I had some decent clothes. I bought these trousers out of what I earned in London. I spun out my money as fine as any man could."

The poor fellow who gave me the following narrative was a coloured man, with the regular negro physiognomy, but with nothing of the lighthearted look they sometimes present. His only attire was a sadly soiled shirt of coarse striped cotton, an old handkerchief round his neck, old canvas trousers, and shoes. "I am twenty," he said, in good English, "and was born in New York. My father was a very dark negro, but my mother was white. I was sent to school, and can read a little, but can't write. My father was coachman to a gentleman. My mother spoke Dutch chiefly; she taught it to my father. She could speak English, and always did to me. I worked in a gentleman's house in New York, cleaning knives and going errands. I was always well treated in New York, and by all sorts of people. Some of the 'rough-uns' in the streets would shout after me as I was going to church on a Sunday night. At church I couldn't sit with the white people. I didn't think that any hardship. I saved seven dollars by the time I was sixteen, and then I went to sea as a cabin-boy on board the 'Elizabeth,' a brigantine. My first voyage was to St. John's, New Brunswick, with a cargo of corn and provisions. My second voyage was to Boston. After that I was raised to be cook. I had a notion I could cook well. I had cooked on shore before, in a gentleman's house, where I was shown cooking. Pretty many of the cooks in New York are coloured people—the men more than the women. The women are chiefly chambermaids. There was a vacancy, I was still in the 'Elizabeth,' when the cook ran away. He was in a bother with the captain about wasting tea and sugar. We went some more voyages, and I then got engaged as cook on board a

new British ship, just off the stocks, at St. John's, New Brunswick, the 'Jessica.' About four months ago I came in her to Liverpool, where we were all paid off. We were only engaged for the run. I received 5*l.* I paid 2*l.* 10*s.* to my boarding mistress for two months' board. It was 5*s.* and extras a-week. I laid out the rest in clothes. I had a job in Liverpool, in loading hay. I was told I had a better chance for a ship in London. I tramped it all the way, selling some of my clothes to start me. I had 6*s.* to start with, and got to London with hardly any clothes, and no money. That's two months back, or nearly so. I couldn't find a ship. I never begged, but I stood on the highways, and some persons gave me twopences and pennies. I was often out all night, perishing. Sometimes I slept under the butchers' stalls in Whitechapel. I felt the cold very bitter, as I was used to a hot climate chiefly. Sometimes I couldn't feel my feet. A policeman told me to come here, and I was admitted. I want to get a ship. I have a good character as a cook; my dishes were always relished; my pea-soup was capital, and so was my dough and pudding. I often wished for them when I was starving." [He showed his white teeth, smiling as he spoke.] "Often under the Whitechapel stalls I was so frozen up I could hardly stir in the morning. I was out all the night before Christmas that it snowed. That was my worst night, I think, and it was my first. I couldn't walk, and hardly stand, when the morning came. I have no home to go to."

The next was a brickmaker, a man scarce thirty, a stout, big-boned man, but a little pale, evidently from cold and exhaustion. His dress was a short smockfrock, yellow with dry clay, and fustian trousers of the same colour, from the same cause. His statement was as follows:—

"I have been out of work now about seven weeks. Last work I done was on the Middle Level Drainage, in Cambridgeshire. Brick-making generally begins (if the weather's fine) about February, or the beginning of March, and it ends about September, and sometimes the latter end of November. If the weather's frosty, they can't keep on so long. I was at work up to about the middle of November last, making bricks at Northfleet, in Kent. I was with the same party for three years before. After that, brickmaking was done for the season, and I was discharged with 'five stools' of us beside. Each stool would require about six people to work it; so that altogether thirty hands were thrown out of work. After that I went to look for work among the 'slop' brickmakers. They makes bricks 'slop-way' right through the winter, for they're dried by flues. I am by rights a sand-stock brickmaker. However, I couldn't get a job at brickmaking slop-way, so I went down on the Middle Level, and there I got a job at river-cutting; but the wet weather came, and the water was so

strong upon us that we got drowned out. That's the last job I've had. At brickmaking I had 3s. 10d. a thousand, this last summer. I have had my 4s. 6d. for the very same work. Two years ago I had that. Six of us could make about 35,000 in a-week, if it was fine. On an average, we should make, I dare say, each of us about 1l. a-week, and not more, because if it was a showery day we couldn't do nothing at all. We used to join one among another in the yard to keep our own sick. We mostly made the money up to 14s. a-week when any mate was bad. I did save a few shillings, but it was soon gone when I was out of work. Not many of the brickmakers save. They work from seventeen to eighteen hours every day when it's fine, and that requires a good bit to eat and drink. The brickmakers most of them drink hard. After I got out of work last November, I went away to Peterborough to look for employment. I thought I might get a job on the London and York Railway, but I couldn't find none. From there I tramped it to Grimsby: 'perhaps,' I said, 'I may get a job at the docks;' but I could get nothing to do there, so I came away to Grantham, and from there back to Peterborough again, and after that to Northampton, and then I made my way to London. All this time I had laid either in barns at night-times, or slept in the casual wards of the unions—that is, where they would have me. Often I didn't get nothing to eat for two or three days together, and often I have had to beg a bit to keep body and soul together. I had no other means of living since November last but begging. When I came to town I applied at a large builder's office for work. I heard he had something to do at the Isle of Dogs, but it was the old story—they were full, and had plenty of hands till the days got out longer. Then I made away to Portsmouth. I knew a man there who had some work, but when I got there he had none to give me at the present time. From there I went along the coast, begging my way still, to Hastings, in hope of getting work at the railway; but all to no good. They had none, too, till the days got longer. After that I came round to London again, and I have been here a fortnight come next Monday. I have done no work. I have wandered about the streets any way. I went to the London Docks to see for a job, and there I met with a man as I knowed, and he paid for my lodging for one or two nights. I walked the streets for two whole nights before I came here. It was bitter cold, freezing sharp, indeed, and I had nothing to eat all the time. I didn't know there was such a place as this till a policeman told me. A gentleman gave me 6d., and that's all I've had since I've been in this town. I have been for the last three nights at the Asylum. I don't suppose they'll take my ticket away till after to-morrow night, and then I thought of making my way down home

till my work starts again. I have sought for work all over the country, and can't get any. All the brickmakers are in the same state as myself. They none of them save, and must either starve or beg in the winter. Most times we can get a job in the cold weather, but this year, I don't know what it is, but I can't get a job at all. Former years I got railway work to do, but now there's nothing doing, and we're all starving. When I get down home I shall be obliged to go into the union, and that's hard for a young man like me, able to work, and willing; but it ain't to be had, it ain't to be had."

Then came a tailor, a young man only twenty-one years old, habited in a black frock-coat, with a plaid shawl twisted round his neck. His eyes were full and expressive, and he had a look of intelligence superior to any that I had yet seen. He told a story which my inquiries into the "slop trade" taught me was "ower true."

"I have been knocking about for near upon six weeks," he replied, in answer to my inquiries. "I was working at the slop-trade at the West-end. I am a native of Scotland. I was living with a sweater. I used to board and lodge with him entirely. At the week's end I was almost always in debt with him—at least he made it out so. I had very often to work all night, but let me slave as hard as I might I never could get out of debt with the sweater. There were often as many as six of us there, and we slept two together in each bed. The work had been slack for some time, and he gave me employment till I worked myself out of his debt, and then he turned me into the streets. I had a few clothes remaining, and these soon were sold to get food and lodging. I lived on my other coat and shirts for a week or two, and at last all was gone, and I was left entirely destitute. Then I had to pace the streets all day and night. The two nights before I came here I never tasted food nor lay down to rest. I had been in a four-penny lodging before then, but I couldn't raise even that; and I knew it was no good going there without the money. You must pay before you go to bed at those places. Several times I got into a doorway, to shelter from the wind and cold, and twice I was roused by the policeman, for I was so tired that I fell asleep standing against a shop near the Bank. What with hunger and cold, I was in a half-stupid state. I didn't know what to do: I was far from home and my mother. I have not liked to let her know how badly I was off." [The poor lad's eyes flooded with tears at the recollection of his parent.] "I thought I had better steal something, and then at least I should have a roof over my head. Then I thought I'd make away with myself. I can't say how; it was a sort of desperation; and I was so stupid with cold and want, that I can hardly remember what I thought. All I wanted was to be allowed to sit down on some

doorstep and die; but the police did not allow this. In the daytime I went up and lay about the parks most part of the day, but I couldn't sleep then; I hardly know why, but I'd been so long without food, that I couldn't rest. I have purposely kept from writing to my mother. It would break her heart to know my sufferings. She has been a widow this ten years past. She keeps a lodging-house in Leith, and has two children to support. I have been away eight months from her. I came to London from a desire to see the place, and thinking I could better my situation. In Edinburgh, I had made my 1l. a-week regularly; often more, and seldom less. When I came to London, a woman met me in the street, and asked me if I wasn't a tailor? On my replying in the affirmative, she informed me if I would come and work for her husband, I should have good wages, and live with her and her husband, and they would make me quite comfortable. I didn't know she was the wife of a sweater at that time. It was a thing I had never heard of in Edinburgh. After that time, I kept getting worse and worse off, working day and night, and all Sunday, and still always being in debt to them I worked for. Indeed, I wish I had never left home. If I could get back, I'd go in a moment. I have worked early and late, in the hope of accumulating money enough to take me home again, but I could not even get out of debt, much more save, work as hard as I would."

I asked if he would allow me to see some letters of his mother's, as vouchers for the truth of his story, and he produced a small packet, from which, with his permission, I copied the following:—

"My dear Son,—I have this moment received your letter. I was happy to hear from you, and trust you are well. Think of that God who has carried you in safety over the mighty deep. We are all much as you left us. I hope you will soon write. Ever believe me,

"Your affectionate mother,
" — — —"

This was the first letter written after his absence from home. Since then his mother, who is aged and rheumatic (his letters vouched for this), had been unable to write a line. His brother, a lad of 16, says, in one of his letters,—

"I am getting on with my Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and French, only I am terribly ill off for want of books. My mother was saying that you would be bringing me a first-rate present from London. I think the most appropriate present you can bring me will be a Greek and English, or a Hebrew and English Lexicon; or some Hebrew, Greek, or Latin book."

A letter from his sister, a girl of 18, ran as follows:—

No. 99.

"My dear brother,—I take this opportunity of writing you, as you wrote that you would like to have a letter from me. I am very sorry you have been ill, but I hope you are keeping better. I trust also that affliction will be the means of leading you only more closely to the only true source of happiness. Oh, my dear brother, you are still young, and God has told us in His word, that those who seek Him early shall find Him. My dear brother, we get many a sad and solemn warning to prepare to meet our God: and oh! my dear brother, 'what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'"

The last letter was dated the 5th of December last, and from his brother:—

"We received your kind letter," it ran, "this instant, and we hasten to answer it. It has given my mother and me great relief to hear from you, as my mother and I were very miserable about you, thinking you were ill. We trust you will take care of yourself, and not get any more cold. We hope you will be able to write on receipt of this, and let us know how you are, and when we may expect you home, as we have daily expected you since the month of October."

These letters were shown to me at my request, and not produced by the young man himself, so that it was evident they were kept by the youth with no view of being used by him as a means of inducing charity; indeed, the whole manner of the young man was such as entirely precluded suspicion. On my asking whether he had any other credentials as to character, he showed me a letter from a Scotch minister, stating that "he had been under his charge, and that from his conduct he had been led to form a favourable opinion of his talents and moral character; and that he believed him to be a deserving, industrious young man."

Of the class of distressed tradesmen seeking shelter at this asylum, the two following may be taken as fair types. One was a bankrupt linendraper, and appeared in a most destitute state. When he spoke of his children, his eyes flooded with tears:—

"I have been in business in the linen-draper's line—that's five years ago. I had about 600l. worth of stock at first starting, and used to take about 65l. every week. My establishment was in a country village in Essex. I went on medium well for the first two or three years, but the alteration of the poor-laws and the reduction of the agricultural labourers' wages destroyed my business. My customers were almost all among the working classes. I had dealings with a few farmers, of whom I took butter, and cheese, and eggs, in exchange for my goods. When the poor-laws were altered, the out-door relief was

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stopped, and the paupers compelled to go inside the house. Before that, a good part of the money given to the poor used to be expended at my shop. The overseers used to have tickets for flannels, blankets, and shirtings, and other goods; with these they used to send the paupers to my house. I used to take full 8*l.* or 10*l.* a-week in this manner; so that when the poor-laws were altered, and the previous system discontinued, I suffered materially. Besides, the wages of the agricultural labourers being lowered, left them less money to lay out with me. On a market-day they were my chief customers. I would trust them one week under the other, and give them credit for 7*s.* or 10*s.*, if they wanted it. After their wages came down, they hadn't the means of laying out a sixpence with me; and where I had been taking 65*l.* a-week, my receipts dwindled to 30*l.* I had been in the habit of keeping two shopmen before, but after the reduction I was obliged to come down to one. Then the competition of the large houses in other towns was more than I could stand against. Having a larger capital, they could buy cheaper, and afford to take a less profit, and so of course they could sell much cheaper than I could. Then, to try and keep pace with my neighbours, I endeavoured to extend my capital by means of accommodation bills, but the interest I had to pay on these was so large, and my profits so little, that it soon became impossible for me to meet the claims upon me. I was made a bankrupt. My debts at the time were 300*l.* This is about six years ago. After that I took a public-house. Some property was left me. I came into about 1000*l.*; part of this went to my creditors, and I superseded my bankruptcy. With the rest I determined upon starting in the publican line. I kept at this for about ten months, but I could do nothing with it. There was no custom to the house. I had been deceived into taking it. By the time I got out of it all my money was gone. After that I got a job as a referee at the time of the railway mania, and when that was over, I got appointed as a policeman on the Eastern Union line. There I remained two years and upwards, but then they began reducing their establishment, both in men and in wages. I was among the men who were turned off. Since that time, which is now two years this Christmas, I have had no constant employment. Occasionally I have got a little law-writing to do; sometimes I have got a job as under-waiter at a tavern. After I left the waiter's place, I got to be very badly off. I had a decent suit of clothes to my back up to that time, but then I became so reduced, I was obliged to go and live in a low lodging-house in Whitechapel. I was enabled to get along somehow; I know many friends, and they gave me a little money now and then. But at last I had exhausted these. I could get nothing to do of any kind. I have been to Shoreditch station to try to pick up

a few pence at carrying parcels, but there were so many there that I could not get a crust that way. I was obliged to pawn garment after garment to pay for my food and lodging; and when they were all gone, I was wholly destitute. I couldn't even raise two-pence for a night's lodging, so I came here and asked for a ticket. My wife is dead. I have three children; but I would rather you would not say anything about them, if you please."

I assured the man that his name should not be printed, and he then consented to his children being mentioned.

"The age of my eldest child is fourteen, and my youngest nine. They do not know of the destitution of their father. They are staying with one of my relations, who has supported them since my failure. I wouldn't have them know of my state on any account. None of my family are aware of my misery. My eldest child is a girl, and it would break her heart to know where I am, and see the state of distress I am in. My boy, I think, would never get over it. He is eleven years old. I have tried to get work at carrying placard-boards about, but I can't. My clothes are now too bad for me to do anything else. I write a good hand, and would do anything, I don't care what, to earn a few pence. I can get a good character from every place I have been in."

The other tradesman's story was as follows:—

"I am now thirty-three, and am acquainted with the grocery trade, both as master and assistant. I served a five-years' apprenticeship in a town in Berkshire. The very late hours and the constant confinement made me feel my apprenticeship a state of slavery. The other apprentices used to say they felt it so likewise. During my apprenticeship I consider that I never learnt my trade properly. I knew as much at the year's end as at the five years' end. My father gave my master fifty pounds premium; the same premium, or more, was paid with the others. One, the son of a gentleman at —, paid as much as eighty pounds. My master made an excellent thing of his apprentices. Nearly all the grocers in the part of Berkshire I'm acquainted with do the same. My master was a severe man to us, in respect of keeping us in the house, and making us attend the Methodist Chapel twice, and sometimes thrice, every Sunday. We had prayers night and morning. I attribute my misfortunes to this apprenticeship, because there was a great discrepancy between profession and practice in the house; so there could be no respect in the young men for their employer, and they grew careless. He carried on his business in a way to inspire anything else than respect. On the cheesemongery side we were always blamed if we didn't keep the scale well wetted, so as to make it heavier on one side than the other—I mean the side of the scale where the butter was put—that was filled or partly filled with water, under pretence of

preventing the butter sticking, and so the customer was wronged half an ounce in every purchase. With regard to the bacon, which, on account of competition, we had to sell cheap—at no profit sometimes—he used to say to us, 'You must make the ounces pay;' that is, we were expected to add two or more ounces, calculating on what the customer would put up with, to every six odd ounces in the weight of a piece. For instance, if a hock of bacon weighed six pounds seven ounces, at 4½*d.* per pound, we were to charge 2*s.* 3*d.* for the six pounds, and (if possible) adding two ounces to the seven which was the actual weight, charge each ounce a halfpenny, so getting 2*s.* 7½*d.* instead of 2*s.* 5*d.* This is a common practice in all the cheap shops I am acquainted with. With his sugars and teas, inferior sorts were mixed. In grinding pepper, a quantity of rice was used, it all being ground together. Mustard was adulterated by the manufacturers, if the price given showed that the adulterated stuff was wanted. The lowest priced coffee was always half chiccory, the second quality one-third chiccory; the best was one pound of chiccory to three pounds of coffee, or one-fourth. We had it either in chiccory-nibs, which is the root of the endive cultivated in Yorkshire, Prussia, &c., or else a spurious chiccory powdered, twopence per pound cheaper, the principal ingredient being parsnips and carrots cut in small pieces, and roasted like chiccory. A quart of water is the allowance to every twenty-eight pounds of tobacco. We had to keep pulling it, so as to keep it loose, for if left to lie long it would mould, and get a very unpleasant smell. In weighing sugar, some was always spilt loose in the scale opposite the weight, which remains in the scale, so that every pound or so is a quarter of an ounce short. This is the practice only in cutting shops. Often enough, after we have been doing all these rogueries, we were called into prayers. In my next situation, with an honourable tradesman in Yorkshire, I found I had to learn my business over again, so as to carry it on fairly. In two or three years I went into business in the town where I was apprenticed; but I had been subjected to such close confinement, and so many unnecessary restrictions, without any opportunity of improving by reading, that when I was my own master, and in possession of money, and on the first taste of freedom, I squandered my money foolishly and extravagantly, and that brought me into difficulties. I was 150*l.* deficient to meet my liabilities, and my friends advanced that sum, I undertaking to be more attentive to business. After that, a man started as a grocer in the same street, in the 'cutting' line, and I had to compete with him, and he sold his sugar a halfpenny a pound less than it cost, and I was obliged to do the same. The preparing of the sugar for the market-day is a country grocer's week's work, and all at a loss.

That's the ruin of many a grocer. My profits dwindled year by year, though I stuck very close to business; and in eighteen months I gave it up. By that time other 'cutting' shops were opened—none have done any good. I was about 100*l.* bad, which my friends arranged to pay by instalments. After that I hawked tea. I did no good in that. The system is to leave it at the working men's houses, giving a week's credit, the customers often taking more. Nothing can be honestly made in that trade. The Scotchmen in the trade are the only men that can do any good in it. The charge is six shillings for what's four shillings in a good shop. About nine months ago my wife—I had been married seven years—was obliged to go and live with her sister, a dressmaker, as I was too poor to keep her or myself either. I then came to London, to try for employment of any kind. I answered advertisements, and there were always forty or fifty young men after the same situation. I never got one, except for a short time at Brentford. I had also a few days' work at bill delivery—that is, grocers' circulars. I was at last so reduced that I couldn't pay for my lodgings. Nobody can describe the misery I felt as I have walked the streets all night, falling asleep as I went along, and then roused myself up half-frozen, my limbs aching, and my whole body trembling. Sometimes, if I could find a penny, I might sit up in a coffee-shop in Russell-street, Covent-garden, till five in the morning, when I had to roam the streets all day long. Two days I was without food, and determined to commit some felony to save me from starvation, when, to my great joy—for God knows what it saved me from, as I was utterly careless what my fate would be—I was told of this refuge by a poor man who had been there, who found me walking about the Piazzas in Covent-garden as a place of shelter. I applied, and was admitted. I don't know how I can get a place without clothes. I have one child with my wife, and she supports him and herself very indifferently by dressmaking."

A soldier's wife, speaking with a strong Scotch accent, made the following statement. She had altogether a decent appearance, but her features—and there were the remains of prettiness in her look—were sadly pinched. Her manners were quiet, and her voice low and agreeable. She looked like one who had "seen better days," as the poor of the better sort not unfrequently say in their destitution, clinging to the recollection of past comforts. She wore a very clean checked cotton shawl, and a straw bonnet tolerably entire. The remainder of her dress was covered by her shawl, which was folded closely about her, over a dark cotton gown.

"I was born twenty miles from Inverness, (she said), and have been a servant since I was eleven. I always lived in good places—the best of places. I never was in inferior

places. I have lived as cook, housemaid, or servant-of-all-work, in Inverness, Elgin, and Tain, always maintaining a good character. I thank God for that. In all my distress I've done nothing wrong, but I didn't know what distress was when in service. I continued in service until I married; but I was not able to save much money, because I had to do all I could for my mother, who was a very poor widow, for I lost my father when I was two years old. Wages are very low in Scotland to what they are in England. In the year 1847 I lived in the service of the barrack-master of Fort George, twelve miles below Inverness. There I became acquainted with my present husband, a soldier, and I was married to him in March, 1847, in the chapel at Fort George. I continued two months in service after my marriage. My mistress wouldn't let me away; she was very kind to me; so was my master: they all were. I have a written character from my mistress." [This, at my request, she produced.] "Two months after, the regiment left Fort George for Leith, and there I lived with my husband in barracks. It is not so bad for married persons in the artillery as in the line (we were in the artillery), in barracks. In our barrack-rooms no single men were allowed to sleep where the married people were accommodated. But there were three or four married families in our room. I lived two years in barracks with my husband, in different barracks. I was very comfortable. I didn't know what it was to want anything I ought to have. My husband was a kind, sober man." [This she said very feelingly.] "His regiment was ordered abroad, to Nova Scotia. I had no family. Only six soldiers' wives are allowed to go out with each company, and there were seventeen married men in the company to which my husband belonged. It's determined by lot. An officer holds the tickets in his cap, and the men draw them. None of the wives are present. It would be too hard a thing for them to see. My husband drew a blank." She continued:—

"It was a sad scene when they embarked at Woolwich last March. All the wives were there, all crying and sobbing, you may depend upon that; and the children, too, and some of the men; but I couldn't look much at them, and I don't like to see men cry. My husband was sadly distressed. I hoped to get out there and join him, not knowing the passage was so long and expensive. I had a little money then, but that's gone, and I'm brought to misery. It would have cost me 6*l.* at that time to get out, and I couldn't manage that, so I stayed in London, getting a day's work at washing when I could, making a very poor living of it; and I was at last forced to part with all my good clothes after my money went; and my husband, God bless him! always gave me his money to do what I thought best with it. I used to earn a little in barracks with my needle, too. I was taken ill with cholera

at the latter end of August. Dear, dear, what I suffered! And when I was getting better I had a second attack, and that was the way my bit of money all went. I was then quite destitute; but I care nothing for that, and would care nothing for anything if I could get out to my husband. I should be happy then. I should never be so happy since I was born before. It's now a month since I was entirely out of halfpence. I can't beg; it would disgrace me and my husband, and I'd die in the streets first. Last Saturday I hadn't a farthing. I hadn't a thing to part with. I had a bed by the night, at 3*d.* a-night, not a regular lodging-house; but the mistress wouldn't trust me no longer, as I owed her 2*s.* 6*d.*, and for that she holds clothes worth far more than that. I heard of this Asylum, and got admitted, or I must have spent the night in the street—there was nothing else for me; but, thank God! I've been spared that. On Christmas day I had a letter from my husband."

This she produced. It contained the following passage:—

"I am glad this letter only costs you a penny, as your purse must be getting very low; but there is a good time coming, and I trust in God it will not be long, my dear wife. I hope you will have got a good place before this reaches you. I am dowing all in my power to help you. I trust in good in 3 months more, if you help me, between us we make it out."

She concluded:—

"I wouldn't like him to know how badly I am off. He knows I would do nothing wrong. He wouldn't suspect me; he never would. He knows me too well. I have no clothes but what are detained for 2*s.* 6*d.*, and what I have on. I have on just this shawl and an old cotton gown, but it's not broke, and my under-clothing. All my wish is to get out to my husband. I care for nothing else in this world."

Next comes the tale of a young girl who worked at velvet embossing. She was comely, and modestly spoken. By her attire it would have been difficult to have told that she was so utterly destitute as I afterwards discovered. She was scrupulously neat and clean in her dress; indeed it was evident, even from her appearance, that she belonged to a better class than the ordinary inmates of the Asylum. As she sat alone in the long, unoccupied wards, she sighed heavily, and her eyes were fixed continually on the ground. Her voice was very sorrowful. Her narrative was as follows:—

"I have been out of work for a very long while, for full three months now, and all the summer I was only on and off. I mostly had my work given out to me. It was in pieces of 100 yards, and sometimes less, and I was paid so much for the dozen yards. I generally had 3½*d.*, and sometimes 1½*d.*, according to what it was; 3½*d.* was the highest price that I had. I could, if I rose at five in the morning, and sat up till twelve, earn between 1*s.* and 1*s.* 3*d.* in

a day. I had to cut the velvet after it had been embossed. I could, if a diamond pattern, do five dozen yards in a-day, and if a leaf pattern, I could only do three dozen and a-half. I couldn't get enough of it to do, even at these prices. Sometimes I was two days in the week without work, and sometimes I had work for only one day in the week. They wanted, too, to reduce the 1½*d.* diamond work to 1*d.* the dozen yards; and so they would have done, only the work got so slack that we had to leave it altogether. That is now seven weeks ago. Before that, I did get a little to do, though it was very little, and since then I have called almost every week at the warehouse, but they have put me off, telling me to come in a fortnight or a week's time. I never kept acquaintance with any of the other young women working at the warehouse, but I dare say about twenty-five were thrown out of work at the same time as I was. Sometimes I made 6*s.* a-week, and sometimes only 3*s.*, and for the last fortnight I got 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week, and out of that I had my own candles to find, and 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week to pay for my lodgings. After I lost my work, I made away with what little clothes I had, and now I have got nothing but what I stand upright in." [The tears were pouring down the cheeks of the poor girl; she was many minutes afterwards before she could answer my questions, from sobbing.] "I can't help crying," she said, "when I think how destitute I am. Oh, yes, indeed, [she cried through her sobs,] I have been a good girl in all my trials. I might have been better off if I had chosen to take to that life. I need not have been here if I had chosen to part with my character. I don't know what my father was. I believe he was a clerk in one of the foreign confectionery houses. He deserted my mother two months before I was born. I don't know whether he is dead or not, for I never set eyes on him. If he is alive, he is very well off. I know this from my aunt, who was told by one of his fellow-clerks that he had married a woman of property and gone abroad. He was disappointed with my mother. He expected to have had a good bit of money with her; but after she married him, her father wouldn't notice her. My mother died when I was a week old, so I do not recollect either of my parents. When my aunt, who was his own sister, wrote to him about myself, my brother and sister, he sent word back that the children might go to the workhouse. But my aunt took pity on us, and brought us all up. She had a little property of her own. She gave us a decent education, as far as lay in her power. My brother she put to sea. My father's brother was a captain, and he took my brother with him. The first voyage he went (he was fourteen), a part of the rigging fell on him and the first mate, and they were both killed on the spot. My sister went as lady's-maid to Lady —, and went abroad with her, now eighteen months ago, and I have never heard

of her since. The aunt who brought me up is dead now. She was carried off two years and three months ago. If she had lived I should never have wanted a friend. I remained with her up to the time of her death, and was very happy before that time. After that I found it very hard for a poor lone girl like me to get an honest living. I have been struggling on ever since, parting with my clothes, and often going for two days without food. I lived upon the remainder of my clothes for some little time after I was thrown entirely out of work; but at last I got a fortnight in debt at my lodgings, and they made me leave; that's a week and three days ago now. Then I had nowhere but the streets to lay my head. I walked about for three days and nights without rest. I went into a chapel. I went there to sit down and pray; but I was too tired to offer up any prayers, for I fell asleep. I had been two nights and three days in the streets before this, and all I had during that time was a penny loaf, and that I was obliged to beg for. On the day that I was walking about, it thawed in the morning, and froze very hard at night. My shoes were very bad, and let in water; and as the night came on, my stockings froze to my feet. Even now I am suffering from the cold of those nights. It is as much as I can do to bend my limbs at present. I have been in the Asylum a week, and to-night is my last night here. I have nowhere to go, and what will become of me the Lord God only knows." [Again she burst out crying most piteously.] "My things are not fit to go into any respectable workroom, and they won't take me into a lodging either, unless I've got clothes. I would rather make away with myself than lose my character." [As she raised her hand to wipe away her tears, I saw that her arms were bare; and on her moving the old black mantle that covered her shoulders, I observed that her gown was so ragged that the body was almost gone from it, and it had no sleeves.] "I shouldn't have kept this," she said, "if I could have made away with it." She said that she had no friend in the world to help her, but that she would like much to emigrate.

I afterwards inquired at the house at which this poor creature had lodged, as to whether she had always conducted herself with propriety while living there. To be candid, I could hardly believe that any person could turn a young friendless girl into the streets because she owed two weeks' rent; though the girl appeared too simple and truthful to fabricate such a statement. On inquiry, I found her story true from the beginning to the end. The landlady, an Irishwoman, acknowledged that the girl was in her debt but 3*s.*; that she had lodged with her for several months, and always paid her regularly when she had money; but she couldn't afford, she said, to keep people for nothing. The girl had been a good, well-behaved, modest girl with her.

DESCRIPTION OF THE ASYLUM FOR THE HOUSELESS.

THE Asylum for the Houseless Poor of London is opened only when the thermometer reaches freezing-point, and offers nothing but dry bread and warm shelter to such as avail themselves of its charity.

To this place swarm, as the bitter winter's night comes on, some half-thousand penniless and homeless wanderers. The poverty-stricken from every quarter of the globe are found within its wards; from the haggard American seaman to the lank Polish refugee, the pale German "out-wanderer," the tearful black sea-cook, the shivering Lascar crossing-sweeper, the helpless Chinese beggar, and the half-torpid Italian organ-boy. It is, indeed, a ragged congress of nations—a convocation of squalor and misery—of destitution, degradation, and suffering, from all the corners of the earth.

Nearly every shade and grade of misery, misfortune, vice, and even guilt, are to be found in the place; for characters are not demanded previous to admission, want being the sole qualification required of the applicants. The Asylum for the Houseless is at once the beggar's hotel, the tramp's town-house, the outcast's haven of refuge—the last dwelling, indeed, on the road to ruin.

It is impossible to mistake the Asylum if you go there at dark, just as the lamp in the wire cage over the entrance-door is being lighted. This is the hour for opening; and ranged along the kerb is a kind of ragged regiment, drawn up four deep, and stretching far up and down the narrow lane, until the crowd is like a hedge to the roadway. Nowhere in the world can a similar sight be witnessed.

It is a terrible thing, indeed, to look down upon that squalid crowd from one of the upper windows of the institution. There they stand shivering in the snow, with their thin, cobwebby garments hanging in tatters about them. Many are without shirts; with their bare skin showing through the rents and gaps of their clothes, like the hide of a dog with the mange. Some have their greasy coats and trousers tied round their wrists and ankles with string, to prevent the piercing wind from blowing up them. A few are without shoes; and these keep one foot only to the ground, while the bare flesh that has had to tramp through the snow is blue and livid-looking as half-cooked meat.

It is a sullenly silent crowd, without any of the riot and rude frolic which generally ensue upon any gathering in the London streets; for the only sounds heard are the squawling of the beggar infants, or the wrangling of the vagrant boys for the front ranks, together with a continued succession of hoarse coughs, that

seem to answer each other like the bleating of a flock of sheep.

To each person is given half-a-pound of the best bread on coming in at night, and a like quantity on going out in the morning; and children, even if they be at the breast, have the same, which goes to swell the mother's allowance. A clerk enters in a thick ledger the name, age, trade, and place of birth of the applicants, as well as where they slept the night before.

As the eye glances down the column of the register, indicating where each applicant has passed the previous night, it is startled to find how often the clerk has had to write down, "in the streets;" so that "ditto," "ditto," continually repeated under the same head, sounded as an ideal chorus of terrible want in the mind's ear.

The sleeping-wards at the Asylum are utterly unlike all preconceived notions of a dormitory. There is not a bedstead to be seen, nor is even so much as a sheet or blanket visible. The ward itself is a long, bare, whitewashed apartment, with square post-like pillars supporting the flat-beamed roof, and reminding the visitor of a large unoccupied store-room—such as are occasionally seen in the neighbourhood of Thames-street and the Docks. Along the floor are ranged what appear at first sight to be endless rows of large empty orange chests, packed closely side by side, so that the boards are divided off into some two hundred shallow tanpit-like compartments. These are the berths, or, to speak technically, the "bunks" of the institution. In each of them is a black mattress, made of some shiny waterproof material, like tarpauling stuffed with straw. At the head of every bunk, hanging against the wall, is a leather—a big "basil" covering—that looks more like a wine-cooper's apron than a counterpane. These "basils" are used as coverlids, not only because they are strong and durable, but for a more cogent reason—they do not retain vermin.

Around the fierce stove, in the centre of the ward, there is generally gathered a group of the houseless wanderers, the crimson rays tinting the cluster of haggard faces with a bright lurid light that colours the skin as red as wine. One and all are stretching forth their hands, as if to let the delicious heat soak into their half-numbed limbs. They seem positively greedy of the warmth, drawing up their sleeves and trousers so that their naked legs and arms may present a larger surface to the fire.

Not a laugh nor sound is heard, but the men stand still, munching their bread, their teeth champing like horses in a manger. One poor wretch, at the time of my visit, had been allowed to sit on a form inside the railings round the stove, for he had the ague; and there he crouched, with his legs near as a roasting-joint to the burning

coals, as if he were trying to thaw his very marrow.

Then how fearful it is to hear the continued coughing of the wretched inmates! It seems to pass round the room from one to another, now sharp and hoarse as a bark, then deep and hollow as a lowing, or—with the old—feeble and trembling as a bleat.

In an hour after the opening the men have quitted the warm fire and crept one after another to their berths, where they lie rolled round in their leathers—the rows of tightly-bound figures, brown and stiff as mummies, suggesting the idea of some large catacomb.

The stillness is broken only by the snoring of the sounder sleepers and the coughing of the more restless.

It is a marvellously pathetic scene. Here is a herd of the most wretched and friendless people in the world, lying down close to the earth as sheep; here are some two centuries of outcasts, whose days are an unvarying round of suffering, enjoying the only moments when they are free from pain and care—life being to them but one long painful operation as it were, and sleep the chloroform which, for the time being, renders them insensible.

The sight sets the mind speculating on the beggars' and the outcasts' dreams. The ship's company, starving at the North Pole, dreamt, every man of them, each night, of feasting; and are those who compose this miserable, frozen-out beggar crew, now regaling themselves, in their sleep, with visions of imaginary banquets?—are they smacking their mental lips over ideal beef and pudding? Is that poor wretch yonder, whose rheumatic limbs rack him each step he takes—is he tripping over green fields with an elastic and joyous bound, that in his waking moments he can never know again? Do that man's restlessness and heavy moaning come from nightmare terrors of policemen and treadwheels?—and which among those runaway boys is fancying that he is back home again, with his mother and sisters weeping on his neck?

The next moment the thoughts shift, and the heart is overcome with a sense of the vast heap of social refuse—the mere human street-sweepings—the great living mixen—that is destined, as soon as the spring returns, to be strewn far and near over the land, and serve as manure to the future crime-crops of the country.

Then come the self-congratulations and the self-questionings! and as a man, sound in health and limb, walking through a hospital, thanks God that he has been spared the bodily ailments, the mere sight of which sickens him, so in this refuge for the starving and the homeless, the first instinct of the well-to-do visitor is to breathe a thanksgiving (like the Pharisee in the parable) that "he is not as one of these."

But the vain conceit has scarcely risen to

the tongue before the better nature whispers in the mind's ear, "By what special virtue of your own are you different from them? How comes it that you are well clothed and well fed, whilst so many go naked and hungry?" And if you in your arrogance, ignoring all the accidents that have helped to build up your worldly prosperity, assert that you have been the "architect of your own fortune," who, let us ask, gave you the genius or energy for the work?

Then get down from your moral stilts, and confess it honestly to yourself, that you are what you are by that inscrutable grace which decreed your birthplace to be a mansion or a cottage rather than a "padding-ken," or which granted you brains and strength, instead of sending you into the world, like many of these, a cripple or an idiot.

It is hard for smug-faced respectability to acknowledge these dirt-caked, erring wretches as brothers, and yet, if from those to whom little is given little is expected, surely, after the atonement of their long suffering, they will make as good angels as the best of us.

CHARITIES AND SUMS GIVEN TO THE POOR.

ACCORDING to the last Report of the Poor-law Commissioners, the paupers receiving in- and out-door relief was, in 1848, no less than 1,870,000 and odd. The number of criminals in the same year was 30,000 and odd. In 1844, the number of lunatics in county asylums was 4000 and odd; while according to the Occupation Abstract of the returns of the population there were, in 1841, upwards of 5000 almspeople, 1000 beggars, and 21,000 pensioners: these formed into one sum, give us no less than two millions and a quarter individuals who pass their time without applying to any gainful occupation, and consequently live in a state of inactivity and vice upon the income of the remainder of the population. By the above computation, therefore, we see that out of a total of 16,000,000 souls, one-seventh, or 14 per cent of the whole, continue their existence either by pauperism, mendicancy, or crime. Now the cost of this immense mass of vice and want is even more appalling than the number of individuals subsisting in such utter degradation. The total amount of money levied in 1848 for the relief of England and Wales was seven millions four hundred thousand pounds; but, exclusive of this amount, the magnitude of the sum that we give voluntarily towards the support and education of the poor classes is unparalleled in the history of any other nation or any other time.

According to the summary of the returns annexed to the voluminous Reports of the Charity Commissioners, the rent of the land and other fixed property, together with the

interest of the money left for charitable purposes in England and Wales, amounts to 1,200,000*l.* a year; and it is believed, by proper management, this return might be increased to an annual income of at least two millions of money; and yet, says Mr. McCulloch, "there can be no doubt that even this large sum falls far below the amount expended every year in voluntary donations to charitable establishments. Nor can any estimate be formed," he adds, "of the money given in charity to individuals; but in the aggregate cannot fail to amount to an immense sum." All things considered, therefore, we cannot be very far from the truth, if we assume that the sums voluntarily subscribed towards the relief of the poor equal, in the aggregate, the total amount raised by assessment for the same purpose; so that it appears that the well-to-do amongst us expend the vast sum of fifteen million pounds per annum in mitigating the miseries of their less fortunate brethren.

But though we give altogether fifteen million pounds a year to alleviate the distress of those who want or suffer, we must remember that this vast sum expresses not only the liberal extent of our sympathy, but likewise the fearful amount of want and suffering, of excess and luxury, that there must be in the land, if the poorer classes require fifteen millions to be added in charity every year to their aggregate income, in order to relieve their pains and privations, and the richer can afford to have the same immense sum taken from theirs, and yet scarcely feel the loss, it shows at once how much the one class must possess and the other want.

MEETING OF TICKET-OF-LEAVE MEN.

A MEETING of ticket-of-leave men, convened by Mr. H. Mayhew, was held some time since at the National Hall, Holborn, with the view of affording to persons of this class, who are anxious to lead a reformed life, an opportunity of stating the difficulties they have to encounter in their endeavour to obtain a honest livelihood. About fifty members of the body responded to Mr. Mayhew's invitation. The men were admitted on presenting their tickets-of-leave, and were required on entrance to fill up the columns of a register, setting forth their ages, their occupations, the offence for which they were last convicted, their sentences, and the amount of instruction they had severally received. From the information thus collected, it appears that only 3 out of the 50 present were above the age of 40, the large majority ranging between 18 and 35, the highest age of all being 68; that they consisted of labourers, hawkers, costermongers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, carpenters, and other handicraftsmen; that their previous punishments varied from 2 years to

14 years' transportation; and that more than one-half of them had been educated either at day schools or Sunday schools. Suspecting that the men would be unwilling to attend if the police presented themselves, either in the hall or at its entrance, Mr. Mayhew took the precaution to apply beforehand to the Metropolitan Commissioners on the subject. The authorities at once acceded to the request thus made to them, and not a solitary constable was permitted to overawe the meeting."

Mr. Mayhew, in opening the proceedings, said:—"The object of this meeting is threefold. In the first place, I wish society to know more about you as a distinct class; secondly, I wish the world to understand the working of the ticket-of-leave system; and, thirdly, I want to induce society to exert itself to assist you, and extricate you from your difficulties. When I first went among you, it was not very easy for me to make you comprehend the purpose I had in view. You at first fancied that I was a Government spy, or a person in some way connected with the police. I am none of these, nor am I a clergyman wishing to convert you to his particular creed, nor a teetotaler anxious to prove the source of all evil to be over-indulgence in intoxicating drink; but I am simply a literary man, desirous of letting the rich know something more about the poor. (Applause.) Some persons study the stars, others study the animal kingdom, others again direct their researches into the properties of stones, devoting their whole lives to these particular vocations. I am the first who has endeavoured to study a class of my fellow-creatures whom Providence has not placed in so fortunate a position as myself, my desire being to bring the extremes of society together—the poor to the rich, and the rich to the poor. (Applause.) I wish to get bodies of men together in a mass, their influence by that means being more sensibly felt than if they remain isolated. I know you, perhaps, nearly as well as many of you know yourselves. I have had many of you in my house with my wife and children, and to your honour and credit be it said, you never wronged me of the smallest article, and, moreover, I never heard a coarse word escape your lips. I have trusted many of you who have been long tried by want of food. I have given you money to get change for me, and you never yet took advantage of me. This shows that there is still a spark of good in each of you. That spark I wish Society to develop, that you may be made what all must really desire to see you. Some two or three Sundays ago I was at Pentonville prison during Divine service. Society believes you to be hardened in heart and unimpressionable. Well, I saw some four hundred prisoners there weeping like children at the melting tale which the clergyman told. He spoke of the burial of a girl by torchlight, at which he officiated, explaining that the reason why the

funeral took place so late was that the father of the deceased had to come about fifty miles to be present, and thence the delay. The old man's tears, he said, fell like rain on the coffin-lid; and yet, in his anguish, the bereaved parent exclaimed that he preferred to see his daughter a corpse than for her to live a life of infamy in the streets. (Sensation.) This sad story could not fail to touch a chord in each of your breasts. But to come to the ticket-of-leave system. The public generally believe that it is a most dangerous thing to set you free under that system. I know this is one of the most important experiments in connexion with the reformation of offenders that has ever been tried, and it has worked better than any other of which I have had experience. In 1853, the old mode of transportation was changed, and an Act passed directing that no person should be sentenced to transportation except for fourteen years or upwards, and that thenceforward sentence of penal servitude should be substituted for transportation for less than fourteen years. At the same time, a discretionary power was given to commute sentences of transportation into terms of penal servitude. Then, for the first time, was it ordained that it should be lawful for her Majesty, under the seal of her secretary of state, to grant any convict, now or hereafter sentenced to transportation, or to the punishment substituted for it, a license to be at large in the United Kingdom, or such part thereof as is expressed in the license, during a portion of his term of imprisonment. The holder of this license is not to be imprisoned by reason of his previous sentence; but if his license is revoked, he is to be apprehended and re-committed. Since the passing of that Act, and between September 1853 and December 31, 1855—a period of about two years and a quarter—the number of convicts released from public works and prisons has been 3880. To this number have to be added juveniles from Parkhurst prison, 297; and convicts from Bermuda and Gibraltar, 435: making a total of 4612. Of this aggregate, 140 have had their licenses revoked, and 118 have been sentenced to penal servitude and imprisonment; making together 258 who have had their licenses cancelled out of the entire 4612. Out of this 258, 27 were committed for breach of the vagrancy law, 20 for ordinary assaults, 8 for assaults on the police, 6 for breach of the game-laws, 2 for desertion from the militia, and 20 for misdemeanour; making together 84, and leaving 174 as the exact number who have relapsed into their former course of life. Thus it appears that only five and a-half per cent of the whole number of tickets-of-leave granted have been revoked. Now, considering that the number of re-committals to prison for England and Wales averages thirty-three in every hundred prisoners; this, I think, is a very favourable result of the ticket-of-leave experiment. Look-

ing at the extreme difficulty of a return to an honest life, it is almost astonishing that so low a per-centage as five and a half of the licenses in all England should have been revoked. You know that, during your imprisonment, there are four stages of probation. In certain prisons you have to do a prescribed amount of work, for which you receive a certain gratuity. The shoemakers, for instance, get *4d.* every week if they make two and a-half pairs, *6d.* for three pairs, and *8d.* for four pairs. The tailors get *4d.* if they make two suits of prison garments, *6d.* for three suits, and *8d.* for four. The matmakers get *4d.* for thirty-six square feet of their work, *6d.* for forty-five feet, and *8d.* for fifty-four. The cotton-weavers get *4d.* for twenty-four yards, *6d.* for thirty, and *8d.* for thirty-six. The cloth-weavers are paid in a similar manner. These sums are entered to your credit, and pass with you from prison to prison until they at last accumulate into an amount, which is handed over to you under certain restrictions on leaving. In the second stage of probation, you receive *6d.* in addition to the ordinary weekly gratuity; in the third stage you receive an addition of *9d.*; and in the fourth stage one of *1s.* or *1s. 3d.* This sum—large or small, according to the term of imprisonment—is placed to your credit on quitting the prison, and is thus distributed:—*5l.* to be paid immediately on discharge, or by post-office order on the convict's arrival at his native place. If the sum is over *5l.* and under *8l.* he receives *4l.* on his discharge, and the balance at the end of two months; if over *8l.* and under *12l.*, half is paid on his discharge and the balance at the end of three months; if over *12l.* and under *20l.*, *5l.* is paid on his discharge, half the balance in two months, and the remainder in three months. In order, however, to obtain this balance, it is necessary for you to be provided with certificates as to character, either from a clergyman, a magistrate, or the employer with whom the holder of the license is then at work. The applicants for these balances have been 1242 in number up to the 31st December last. Of these, 1225 have sent in certificates of a satisfactory nature, only 17 having been sent in of a contrary character—851 certificates were furnished by clergymen, 214 by magistrates, and 177 by employers under whom the persons liberated were engaged. In the 1225 cases above-mentioned, after the expiration of the prescribed number of months, the money was paid to the applicants. Considering the difficulty these persons must experience in obtaining the certificates required of them, the figures I have stated are highly satisfactory as to the working of the system; and I cannot, therefore, understand how society should have gone so far astray on this point as it has done. The public, however, believe ticket-of-leave men to be very dangerous characters—it does not know the training they undergo while in prison. A high authority tells me, that it is

impossible for a gentleman's son to be trained with greater care at Eton or at any of the other public schools than each of you have been. When, however, Society sees two or three, or even some half-dozen of you relapse into your former practices, they jump to the conclusion that the same is the case with you all. They, in fact, think that relapses are the rule and amendment the exception, instead of the fact being quite the other way. This is like the self-delusion of the London apprentices, who fancy there are more wet Sundays in a year than rainy week-days, simply because they want to get out on Sundays, and are particularly vexed when the bad weather keeps them at home. (Laughter.) Now I have tried many experiments at the reformation of criminals, and one-half of them have failed. Yet I am not discouraged; for I know how difficult it is for men to lay aside their past habits. Every allowance ought, therefore, to be made, because they cannot be expected to become angels in a moment. The vice of the present system, in fact, is, that unless a criminal suddenly becomes a pattern man, and at once forgets all his old associates, Society will have none of you, and, as a certain gentleman has expressed it, 'you must all be shot down, and thrown into Society's dust-bin.' (Applause.) A well-known literary gentleman, who had moved in good society, had a daughter, with whom he lived at the east end of London. He was rather lax, perhaps, in the rearing of his child, allowing her to do pretty much as she liked. She once went to a concert, and got acquainted with a 'mobsman,' who accompanied her home, and at last introduced himself to her father as his daughter's suitor. Being a well-dressed, respectable-looking person, the father—good, easy man!—took a liking for him, and not being particular in his inquiries as to the lover's course of life, allowed them to marry. After their marriage, however, the daughter discovered what her husband's pursuits really were. She, of course, acquainted her father with the fact, who, in great distress of mind, called his son-in-law to him, and telling him that he had never had a stain upon his name or character, implored him by every argument he could urge to lead an honest life. The mobsman promised to comply. His father-in-law removed him from the neighbourhood in which he was staying, and placed him in the service of a large railway carrier. In this employ, having one day to take a parcel to a gentleman's house, up-stairs on the mantelpiece he saw a gold watch. This temptation was too much for him, and he seized the article and put it into his pocket. The theft was discovered before the offender had gone any distance; the man was soon arrested, but the father, by dint of great exertion, got him off, on returning the watch and communicating with its owner before the complaint was made at the police-office. The father again en-

treated his son-in-law to abandon his evil courses, but the latter said his old associations were too strong for him, and that he saw no other resource open for him than to leave London altogether. The old man accordingly took him with him to a residence on the banks of the Thames, where, at length, some of his old companions unfortunately met him, and told him of a 'crib' they were going to 'crack,' and of the heavy 'swag' they were likely to get. The prodigal's old habits were again too much for him. He accompanied his former associates in their criminal enterprise, was captured, and thrown again into prison—his father-in-law died in a mad-house, and his wife committed suicide. Thus fearful, then, are the effects of criminal associations, and therefore I am only surprised that so small a percentage of the ticket-of-leave men have yielded to a relapse. Successful, however, as the system has thus far proved, I yet see a considerable amount of evil in connexion with it; and this is the reason why I have called you together, hoping that some of the tales you have to relate will serve to rouse the public to a sense of your real position, and induce them to stretch forth a hand to save you from the ruin that on every hand threatens you. When you come out of prison, destitute as you are of character, there are only two or three kinds of employment open to you, and I therefore wish Society to institute some association to watch over you, to give you every possible advice, to lead you to good courses, and, moreover, to provide you with the means of getting some honest livelihood. (Applause.) I know that as a class you are distinguished mainly by your love of a roving life, and that at the bottom of all your criminal practices lies your indisposition to follow any settled occupation. Continuous employment of a monotonous nature is so irksome to you, that immediately you engage in it you long to break away from it. This, I believe, after long observation of your character, to be true of the majority of you; and you are able to judge if I am right in this conclusion. Society, however, expects, that if you wish to better yourselves, you will at once settle down as steadily as it does, and immediately conform to all its notions; but I am satisfied that if anything effectual is to be done in the way of reforming you, Society must work in consonance and not in antagonism with your nature. In this connexion it appears to me that the great outlet for you is street-trading, where you are allowed to roam at will unchafed by restraints not congenial to your habits and feelings. In such pursuits a small fund for stock-money suffices, and besides, no character is required for those who engage in them. From the inquiries made by a gentleman who lately visited the places in which most of you live, I find that the great

majority of you follow some form or other of street occupation. Still there is this difficulty in your way. The public requires its thoroughfares to be kept clear of obstruction, and I know that the police have been ordered to drive you away—to make you, as the phrase is, 'move on.' You may fancy that the police act thus of their own accord; but I learn from communication with the Commissioners, that the police have to receive requisitions from the shopkeepers and other inhabitants to enforce the Street Act, and are compelled to comply with them. In one instance a tradesman living in a street-market, where about five hundred poor persons were obtaining a livelihood, complained to the police of the obstruction thus occasioned to his business, which was of a 'fashionable' nature. The consequence was that the thoroughfare had to be cleared, and these five hundred persons were reduced almost to a state of starvation, and many of them were forced into the work-house. Now I don't believe that this is right; and I am prepared to say to Society, that no one man in the kingdom should have the power to deprive so large a body of poor persons of all means of gaining an honest subsistence. (Loud applause.) At the same time, certain regulations must be respected; the streets even, you will allow, must not be blocked—(hear, hear)—there must be a free passage, and it is necessary to consider whether a plan may not be devised which will answer both ends. It strikes me that a certain number of poor men's markets might be established very advantageously; for the poor are so linked together that they would rather buy of the poor than the rich; and it is much to their credit that it is so. If spots of ground for markets of this kind were bought by benevolent individuals, and a small toll levied on admission to them, I am sure the speculation would be profitable to those who embarked in it, as well as beneficial to the interests—moral as well as pecuniary—of the street traders. Connected with these establishments there ought to be a school for the children of the traders, a bank for preserving your money, a cook-shop to prevent you from being obliged to take your meals at the public-house, together with many other useful adjuncts which might be grouped round the market. Such experiments have been tried before now. There is the old Rag-fair at Houndsditch, where formerly old clothes were sold in the streets. In that case a Jew bought a piece of land, to which poor traders were admitted on payment of a halfpenny per head, and the project succeeded so admirably that the owner of the ground soon became a rich man. At Paris similar markets have been instituted, and with success, by M. Delamarre; and in the same city there are also public kitchens, where cooked meat can be had at a cheap rate, so as to keep the poor people out of the public-houses. Lodging-houses for

such of the men as choose to come to them would likewise be a valuable appendage to the suggested street-markets, but they must be free from the almost tyrannical supervision which prevails in the existing model lodging-houses in London. Whilst so much vexatious restriction is put upon men's liberties, they cannot be expected to frequent these places in the numbers they otherwise would. Lodging-houses for the reception of ticket-of-leave men on leaving prison might prevent them from being thrown loose upon the world until they have some prospect of a livelihood before them. I wish Society to take these men by the hand—to be lenient and considerate towards them, and not to be annoyed if one or two should recede from their good resolutions; for the experience of the reformatory institutions of London shows that there are often twenty-five per cent of relapses among their inmates. Therefore, if only five and a-half per cent of you fail in your laudable endeavours, as the returns I have quoted show, to be the whole proportion, then I say that you are a class who ought to be encouraged. By this means we shall be able to grapple effectually with this great trouble—viz. how to reform the great bulk of our criminals. Under these circumstances I have invited you here to-night, to give you an opportunity of telling Society what are your difficulties. There is a gentleman present who will publish your grievances all over the kingdom, and I charge you all to speak only the truth. You cannot benefit by any other course, and therefore be you a check the one upon the other; and if any one departs from the strict fact, do you pull him up. Thus you will show the world that you have met here with an earnest desire to better yourselves—thus you will present a spectacle that will go far to convince Society that it runs no risk in giving you your liberty—and prevail upon it to regard not wholly without compassion the few members of your class who, yielding in an evil hour to the trying temptations which beset them, sink unhappily into their former delinquencies." (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The men were then requested to ascend the platform, and relate their own experience, as well as to state their views of how their class could best be assisted. The first to respond to this invitation was a young man of neat and comparatively respectable appearance, who seemed to be known to the rest by the name of 'Peter;' and who, with great fluency and considerable propriety of expression, proceeded to narrate his own past career as follows:—

"Friends, I hope you will excuse any hesitation or stammering on my part while I stand in this unusual position. All the education I have received has been picked up in prison—understand that. As to the difficulties encountered by ticket-of-leave men I know nothing, save from my own personal

experience. You cannot judge properly of the intentions of the convict, unless you begin with his career from the first time that he enters prison. Well, you must know, that I was transported for seven years. I was sent to Millbank, and there put to the tailoring business. From the outset I had a great partiality for books, and I then learnt to read and write better than I could do before. I also acquired a little grammar and arithmetic, simply to improve my mind; and if mental improvement is any part of moral improvement, I was, of course, morally improving also. I knew more arithmetic than I do now, having lost my knowledge in consequence of excessive indulgence in intoxicating liquors. In fact, I got as far as the beginning of algebra—certainly a very abstruse science to tackle. After spending fourteen months in Millbank I went to Portland, where I had to wheel barrows from morning to night. I still persevered, however, with my books; and the great anxiety that constantly weighed on my mind was, what would become of me when I was liberated. I knew that the work I was doing would be well done; and I was far happier then than I am now, because I feel that there is no breakfast for me to-morrow morning till I go and thieve it; and that is the simple truth. (Applause.) I supposed that if I went to the Chaplain, who had delivered several charitable discourses, very much in accordance with my own feelings, he might assist me. I therefore stated my case to him, telling him that I really wished to become a better member of society. He listened to my tale, and wished me to see him once a-week, which I did. But the Chaplain at this time was the Rev. Mr. Moran (as we understood), and when I wanted books he would not encourage me, unless I consented to become a communicant. If I had done that I should have had more favour shown to me, and been provided with whatever I wished; but not feeling myself fit for such a thing, I therefore refused. I then waited till a change took place, and the Rev. Mr. Ubridge, (as we understood), a lover of science and literature, came—a clergyman whose system was altogether different, having none of these Roman Catholic restrictions. We were then allowed to think and do as we liked in regard to religion, and no man was forced to attend the communion-table unless he thought himself as fit for it as the Minister. I applied to the new Chaplain, and told him I considered my mind to have been much enlightened. I suppose everybody fancies the same, who knows a little, though not much. When my turn to be liberated approached they came to me in my separate cell, and I told them there was no chance of my bettering myself unless I could get an honest living. I said that I must go back to London, where I had first been transported, and that the only thing I expected was to

be transported again; for my bad character would be no recommendation to me—the police all knew me, and wherever they saw me they would point me out as a ticket-of-leave man. (Applause.) On my release I received 6*l.* 12*s.* I came to Southampton with one of the officers of the establishment, who was kind enough to ask me to take a drop of brandy. Not having had any spirits for four years previous, this little got into my head, and having drank another glass or two I was intoxicated, and I spent all my money that night—yes, and got locked up into the bargain. (Laughter.) If I did not quite spend all my money myself, somebody else helped me to spend it. I came to London without a farthing. I hadn't a friend in the world, and even at present, if I want a meal, I have no one to say 'Here it is for you.' What is a man in such a case, being without work, to do? Is he to starve? Well, I wore out two pairs of shoes, walking the streets for three months together, looking for a situation, but all in vain; and I became as emaciated as this post, (pointing to the pillar of the lamp on the platform,) having had nothing better than a bit of bread and a herring to eat, and not one ounce of animal food during all that period. I had a little pride, which kept me from begging. All the good feelings engendered in prison passed away. I returned to my old companions, with whom I went for about two months, when I was at length caught, and received another twelvemonth's imprisonment, which expired only last Monday fortnight. During the two months I was with my old companions I got a good living—I could always make my 5*l.* or 6*l.* a-week by practices which I did not like, but which I was driven to adopt, because the public would not let me earn 1*l.* honestly. Since, however, I received the card of admission to this meeting, I have not put my hand to a dishonest act, and if the promise it holds out is fulfilled I never will. I have little more to say. I attended here to-night in the hope of reaping some permanent benefit, and also to encourage those who, like myself, wish to become honest members of society. (Applause.) I trust the benevolent gentleman who has so humanely interested himself in this cause will be successful in his exertions on behalf of a body of unfortunate and persecuted beings, who, I should say, are more knocked about by the police, and more discouraged by the opinions of the public at large, than any other class in the United Kingdom. (Applause.) May God and right reason direct this movement, and bring it to a speedy and prosperous issue." (Loud cheers greeted "Peter," as he descended from the "tribune.")

The next spokesman was a thin-faced and diminutive, but shrewd-looking costermonger, of about twenty-five years of age, and tidier in appearance than many of his class, who

said:—"Friends, I am only a little one, and you can't expect much from me; indeed, 'Peter' hasn't left me much to say. I will, however, begin at the beginning. At the age of ten I was left without father or mother, and others here could say the same. I was taught to get a living by selling oranges in the streets, and I kept at that for twelve months. I was afterwards induced to go along with a few Westminster boys, who went about thieving; and I had nobody to look after me. Having no friend, I nevertheless always got a good 'lift' from the police. I was soon arrested, and at Newgate received seven years' transportation. I spent three years and seven months at the Isle of Wight, and eleven months at Portsmouth. I would not have been kept so long at the Isle of Wight if I had been religious; but as I could not act the hypocrite I was obliged to give up this religion. During this time I never took the sacrament, as they wanted me to do. Well, I gets my liberty, and I had several pounds put into my hands when I left. I came to London-bridge station, and thought it was the Waterloo station, and fancying I was near Westminster, I looked about for the Victoria Theatre. A chap then said to me, 'You had better not be seen in those clothes.' I afterwards changed my dress and sold the other clothes. I soon found myself with only about three half-crowns in my pocket. My only friend was a cousin, who was engaged in buying hare-skins and rabbit-skins about the streets, and he recommended me to do the same. This was in the winter time, and I hardly knew one kind of skin from another. However, I did pretty well at this for two or three weeks; when, one day, as I was walking with a sack of skins upon my back through Tothill-street, Westminster, two policemen came up to me, and demanded to look into my bag. Rather than consent to this I went to the Police Court along with them. When I got there a policeman said to the inspector, that I was a 'ticket-of-leave,' and had something in my sack. I insisted on seeing the magistrate, and the inspector brought me to him, but instead of allowing me to speak to his worship, he spoke first, saying that I was very violent and saucy, and a 'ticket-of-leave.' Instead of hearing what I had to say under these circumstances, the magistrate, too, burst out, 'Oh, you are an insolent fellow, and a disgrace to society; if the Secretary of State knew of your doings, he would banish you.' And his worship, also muttering something about sending me to 'quod' for contempt of court, I thought it better to 'hook it.' During two years and a-half of my term at the Isle of Wight, having learnt something of shoemaking, I now travelled down to Northampton, but could get no work because I had no tools. Even what I did know of the trade was not enough to enable me to get a living by it. I then went on to Derby, and was near

starving. I had no lodging. I was not quite so proud as 'Peter,' for I went up to a gentleman and told him the strength of it. I said, I am a 'ticket-of-leave.' He hardly understood me, but I tried to explain it to him, and he gave me a shilling. With this aid I got my shirt washed, put myself to rights, polished my boots, and up I goes to a magistrate to see what he would say about it. I told him I wanted to go to London, and could not walk all the way. This magistrate can tell whether I am now speaking the truth. I got an interview with him at Derby, and told him I was a ticket-of-leave man. He would scarcely believe me, and imagined rather that I was a returned convict. The police jeering me, said, 'How well polished his boots are! but we think him an impostor.' So, with no other help than the shilling I had obtained, I trudged along in my misery until, with the worms and maggots gnawing my belly, I reached London. Here my cousin got me into the 'market' again, and I married last Christmas twelvemonth, and have one child. I am now just managing to 'crack an honest crust;' and while I can do that I will never thieve more. (Applause.) I am not much of a talker, therefore I can only hope that the kind gentleman who has called us together will succeed in his praiseworthy endeavours to secure fair-play to our ill-used class. I have nothing more to say." (Loud cheers.)

The third speaker was a stonemason, of about thirty, and of a honest and industrious aspect, who said:—"My friends, I have but little to say regarding myself. I was sent away from Newgate to Wakefield in 1851, and put to work. As to gratuity money given to convicts, certainly none was allowed at Wakefield while I was there. As to our treatment there and at other places, I can say that I never had a bit of sweet meat all the time I was at Wakefield. I never had anything but mince-meat chopped up, always green, and others can testify to the same thing. One man got three days of bread and water for complaining of this. After staying thirteen months at Wakefield I went to Portsmouth, where I remained about three years and a half, during which time I certainly worked hard. There the treatment of the men differs greatly, according to their conduct. A man who behaves well is treated well; but those of a volatile spirit are treated badly. For myself I never had a report made against me all the time I was there, and I obtained my liberty under ticket-of-leave, although I was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, at the end of four years and four months. A few others, who came later than I did, were fortunate enough to get their freedom about the same time. I was not jealous about that, but was glad to get away myself. I had a mother and sister to go to; and though my sister was in employment, I did not cost them

anything. I got work at my own trade, and experienced few of the hardships which most of my class do when first liberated. I know one poor man who said this meeting was the last place that he would come to, as it would expose him. He has worked five weeks for a person in Gray's-Inn-lane. He had been in good circumstances, was a clerk, and under the eye of a minister. He had to sleep in a place where the vermin crawled over his bed, and he had to get up in the night and remove his clothes to keep them clean. For the five weeks he has been at work he has scarcely had the barest necessities of subsistence. I have been to see this man every Sunday, and can safely say that he has not had sixpence in his pocket ever since he has been out of prison. He was engaged at fire-work making, but this trade becoming slack after the 5th of November, he was thrown upon the streets again. I will not say what became of the man afterwards, because that is not necessary. I will merely mention that he is now struggling on, depending entirely on the public for a meal of victuals. I have myself been to work in the city for two months, and have not been intoxicated once. I am not fond of drink. I am steady and mean to continue so, and I trust every one here will resolve to do the same, for you will find it much more to your comfort. I am fortunate enough to be able to earn a livelihood at my trade as a mason; but though I am not in want myself, I could not refrain from coming here to throw what light I could on this subject, and showing my readiness to help others who are in distress." (Applause.)

The next who mounted the platform was an elderly man, evidently much reduced in circumstances. He stated—"I am a dock-labourer, and in 1848 was convicted, though innocent, at the Old Bailey. I was within three miles of the place where the robbery of which I was accused was committed. I was certainly in company with the female who was robbed three hours before the theft occurred; but I had no hand in it, and yet I was sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. I passed my first eleven months at Millbank; then I went to Woolwich, and next to Gibraltar. At the latter place Mr. Armstrong is the overseer of the convicts, and he is the severest man ever known; not a worse being in the Australian or any penal settlements. Flogging went on there from before daylight till long after dark. I was six years and eight months under his system, and I received 4*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* on leaving Gibraltar, 2*l.* 10*s.* of which was stopped to pay my passage to England. When I came home I strived as hard as any man to get an honest livelihood. I tried every experiment—I went all up and down Whitechapel, but no, the police would not allow me—they picked me out as a marked man. Then I worked fifteen or sixteen months at the Docks, but lately that employment has been very

slack, and I have tried all the offices in vain for the last fortnight. I leave you to consider, therefore, what a man is to do when he strives to get a living and can't. No man in all London has seen more trouble than I have. In 1840 I got three years' imprisonment. When I came out a man borrowed my coat to walk through the City with, and next day, as I was going past Bow Church, I was taken up for a robbery which that man had committed, my coat being sworn to, as it had a stain on the collar. I was taken before Alderman Gibbs that morning, and fully committed for trial; and when I appeared at Newgate I got twelve months in the Compter gaol, though innocent. I had not been three months out of the Compter before I was taken up for beating a policeman, who said I threw a stone at him, but I never did. A fortnight afterwards the man who did it got fourteen days, and I gets two years for it, though I was not nigh the place. No man in London has suffered as I have done wrongfully, and none has been so 'worked up' as I am at this moment. For the last fortnight the winds have been such as to prevent a single ship from coming up the Channel, and morning after morning between five hundred and six hundred men regularly wait at the Docks for employment and cannot get it. When I am employed, it is at the West Quay; but the permanent labourers are served first. Such men as I have very little chance, as they bring persons from the other side of the Dock sooner than engage 'casualty' labourers. During the eighteen months that have elapsed since I came from Gibraltar, I have walked the streets of London whole days without breaking my fast; and since twelve o'clock yesterday up to this moment I have not done so. I really wish, sir, that something could be done for us all."

Mr. Mayhew asked the men whether they thought the formation of a society, and a system by which those who were in work could assist those who were out of it, would benefit them?

To this many voices answered, "Yes! yes!"

Mr. Mayhew continued: "I know that if your stock-money is once gone you are completely helpless. A man who had been tried for his life and sent to Australia came to me one day, when let out of prison, with a loaf under his arm, and said, 'This is all I have got to keep me, and if I ask for work there is a policeman at my heels to tell every one that I am a returned convict.' His case became desperate, when, about the time of the Great Exhibition, I offered to give him a little money if he would pledge me his word to do all that he could to lead an honest life. He shook hands with me, and promised to do so. He then had cards printed, and tried to make a living by selling gelatine sweets. After a little time he took a small huckster's shop, and subsequently married a lodging-house keeper, and has since been doing very well. I

know that the period between the ages of twenty-five and fifty is the time when a roving life has its strongest attractions; but after that, when a man is hunted like a dog, he gets tired of it. I have seen frequent examples of this, and known whole families of poor people, with only sixpence at their command, to invest that small sum in sprats, and live a month upon it by turning it over and over.

"I once took a poor boy (a young thief) and got him a place at the *Daily News* office, when the printer and editor told me he was as good and as well-behaved as any boy on that establishment. The difficulty, however, was to separate him from his old 'pals.' He got among them on an Easter Monday, and was found picking pockets at a fair, and taken to prison; it was 'all up with him' till he had seen the misery of his course of life, but I am sure, if taken by the hand, he will ultimately become a good member of society. I mention this to show, that if a little leniency and kindness are evinced towards the men we may beat down the crime of the country to an enormous extent. But we must not fancy it possible that such persons can be made model-men in an instant. Indeed, I believe that the disposition shown to make converts to religion of you produces a large amount of hypocrisy. (Cries of Yes! yes!) If this leads you to become better men, in Heaven's name, say so; but if it engenders the worst form of evil, let it be exposed. That there are such things as miracles of instantaneous reformation, I don't deny; but the first thing wanted is some society to give men what will keep them from starving, clothe them, and find them in a lodging; and when they are thus placed in decent comfort, and made, as a necessary consequence, more kindly in their nature, other people may then come to them and try to make them religious. To attempt, however, to proselytise men who are famishing, appears to me a mockery and a delusion, and only the most depraved class of criminals would, I believe, yield to it." (Applause.)

The fifth ticket-of-leave man who addressed the assembly was a man of middle stature, slightly made, and between twenty-five and thirty. He said:—

"I was sentenced to seven years' transportation at the Old Bailey. I went to Wakefield and can confirm the statement of a previous speaker, that no gratuities are allowed there. I next went to Portsmouth, where I remained two years and two months, when I was discharged on ticket-of-leave. I returned to the neighbourhood from whence I was committed. A master who promised to give me constant employment had before this given me a certificate. I was discharged about eighteen months ago. Whilst I was at work for my master a female came up to me and asked me if I had seen two other women pass. I answered, 'No,' when she invited me to have something to drink; and knowing the female,

I accepted her offer. While walking with her, only two doors from where I lived, a policeman came up and took us both into custody. This, I suppose, was because I was known to be a returned convict. The woman was charged with being concerned with others of her own sex with robbing a gentleman, and on being searched a portion of the money was found on her, but none on me. Moreover, the gentleman stating that there was no man engaged in the theft, I was discharged. I then resumed work, but was taken again upon a charge of burglary. Many of you may have heard of the case. I was in my shirt-sleeves when I was arrested. The case was tried before Mr. Brenham. I did not deny my name, and being a ticket-of-leave man I was remanded for a week. I was afterwards brought up and re-examined, and after a careful investigation I was discharged. If there had been the slightest suspicion attaching to me, from my character being known, I must have been either imprisoned for three months, or committed for trial. I again returned to my work, but in three weeks afterwards I was dragged out of my bed and locked up for three hours in the Bagnigge-wells station, whence I was taken to Bow-street. Three policemen had burst my bedroom-door open before six o'clock in the morning, and while it was yet dark. They said they wanted me, because I had been concerned with a female in the robbery which had occurred two nights previous, on Pentonville-hill. The inspector told me he had received an order from the Secretary of State to send me back to Portsmouth prison, my license being revoked. When I got to Bow-street I was placed before Mr. Hall, not in open court, but in a private room. That gentleman also told me that my license had been revoked, on the alleged grounds that I was living by dishonest means. I was sent back to prison accordingly; but through the intercession of my brother—a married man, who showed that I had been working for twelve months—I was again released. There was no just ground whatever for sending me back to prison. I have only been home a fortnight, and having no tools I don't know what to do. The master who employed me before has got another man."

Mr. MAYHEW here remarked, that it would be a great encouragement to Society to help them, if those who were doing well assisted those who were doing badly; whereupon

PETER observed that "it was little help that the one could possibly give to the other. An Association (he said) was what was wanted, whereby the men's present urgent necessities could be relieved before they fell into mischief. A few days after a man's liberation he generally found that he had acted foolishly, and returned to his senses. If, therefore, a society took him by the hand, and gave him temporary shelter and counsel, it would be the best thing that could happen to him."

Those of the lads and men present who had been left without father or mother from an early age, were then requested to hold up their hands; when twenty out of the forty-eight did so.

A lame blacksmith and fitter, of about forty, whose garb and complexion were in strict keeping with his craft, and who spoke with not a few grains of stern bitterness in his tone, next mounted the rostrum. He said: "I have been transported, and am a 'spotted man,' with whom the police can do as they like. I was a long time at Dartmoor, one of the hardest convict stations a man can go to, and I did the prison work there. I went there in 1851, when an eminent doctor, Mr. McIntosh, belonged to the place, but having good health I did not need his assistance. While in the infirmary on several occasions, but not for illness, I saw the medicine that was given to the patients. It was only a large bottle of salts. I have known a man to be cut out of his hammock, taken down-stairs, and buried, all in three hours; and I have heard the doctor say of a sick man, 'Let him drink out of a pail till he bursts.' (Some sensation.) I was a privileged man because I was handy, and fitted up almost the whole iron-work of the place. Once some books were pilfered; and at dinner-time there was a general turn over and search at parade. The 'searcher' was a very sedate man, at least in the eyes of the Governor, but he was the most malicious person that ever stripped. After feeling the pockets of the man next to me, this person called me out, and, contrary to the rule, took me into the yard and stripped me naked. I remonstrated, and wished him to choose a place not in the open air, but for this I was ordered to a cell, and while on my way there he borrowed a sword from an officer—the foreman of the smith's shop—and made a cut at me with the back edge of the weapon, inflicting a wound of eighteen inches long. I went to my cell, and next morning I was, to my astonishment, charged with attempting to knock this very man down with a hammer! The Governor would not hear a word that I had to say. I was inspected by the doctor, and then put back, to appear afterwards before the directors. The charge against me was wholly false. The foreman of the smith's shop was a straightforward man, and when applied to about my character, he told the governor that a quieter man, and one more capable of doing his work than me, he could not wish to see. The accuser could not look me in the face; but if the foreman spoke the truth to the directors,—and he was a man who would speak nothing else,—he would have been sure to have his band removed from his cap. So, instead of my being taken before the directors, I was sent to my dinner; and I never received the least redress for the wrongs I endured.

"Before returning home I was classed as a

permanent invalid, and yet I was kept at work on iron-work of three tons weight. After acting four years as a mechanic and a 'first-rater' at Dartmoor, I got invalidated pay, and went home with about 7l. in my pocket. That is all the reward given to a good workman and well-conducted man at Dartmoor. I have heard much of Wakefield, and believe the system there will reform any man. It has a first-rate character; but as to Dartmoor, a man leaving it can have no reformation in him. At Dartmoor, when visitors wish to try the prisoners' soup, a basin of nice beef tea, standing smoking on the hob, and fit to show gentlemen, is offered them to taste. But this is not the soup which is really given to the convicts; that is merely a little rice and water. In fact, Dartmoor is one of the most villainous places a man can be put into. You have there to swab up two or three pails of water before you can rise in the morning. The brutality practised is terrible; and remember, when a man is prejudiced against the treatment he receives, no permanent improvement of his character is possible. Let any Dartmoor man here get up and deny what I say about the place, if he can. The aristocracy fancy that it is an excellent convict station, but it is not. I have seen clean and comfortable-looking men taken off parade, because they would not do an officer's dirty work, and conducted to a covered passage, from which they have not come out again until they did so with faces cut about and bleeding, and with clothes all torn to pieces. I don't say that all the other convict establishments are like Dartmoor. I have seen bodies of seventy and eighty men come there from Wakefield—good-intentioned persons, and evidently having undergone religious impressions, to judge by their regularly kneeling down to prayers; but Dartmoor must contaminate them, and make them worse than ever before they leave it. I never had any particular religious feelings myself while at Dartmoor; but I am sure that a pious life is the most comfortable one under the canopy of heaven. I was very wrongfully sent away to that penal establishment. I had never been convicted before; and my only offence was being concerned in a tap-room drunken fight, for which I was charged with a misdemeanour. It was stated that I intended to do a man some grievous bodily harm, but it was proved that I had no weapon at the time larger than a penny-piece. I only left Dartmoor six or seven months ago. If I were in work, I should be most happy to give my mite towards the society that this gentleman (Mr. Mayhew) speaks of, for the benefit of the poor ticket-of-leave men; but the slackness of trade has thrown me out for the last month, and I have maintained myself and four others who are on my hands for half-a-year."

The concluding speaker was a young and cleanly-looking working man, of prepossessing address, who stated:—"I have experienced

considerable oppression from the police, who, I think, want as much showing up as anybody. In January, 1852, I was sentenced to seven years' transportation. I stopped at the House of Correction for some time, and then went to Northampton borough gaol, where I lay eleven months. Thence I was sent to Woolwich, where I stayed about two years and five months, and was employed in dragging timber from one end of the yard to the other. However, I did very well there, and I find no fault with the place. When I got my liberty I returned home, where I had a father and mother and a sister; but as they were in humble circumstances, I did not like to throw myself on them for my support, and so I looked about for something to do. I am now keeping company with a young woman. One night as I was going home, at half-past twelve, after sitting some hours with her and her father, a policeman suddenly comes up to me, and tapping me on the shoulder, says: 'Halloa, George; so here you are! Mind I don't send you somewhere else for twelve months.' I answered: 'So you may, when I have given you occasion for it.' My landlord saw us, and said that I had done nothing. 'No,' said the policeman, 'or I would not allow him to go free;' and he then told me to move on. My young woman's father keeps a barber's shop; and this policeman goes up to him and acquaints him with my character, asking him whether he is aware that the young man his daughter keeps company with is a returned convict. The father tells her of it, at least she gives me broad hints that imply as much. This man then shows me up, and exposes me several times to the tradesmen in my neighbourhood. I then see what I can do. I cannot get a certificate of character, and I try to write one myself. Then I get several months' imprisonment, and now I have been out seven weeks. But I have not done anything dishonest. Still, if it goes on like this, I am sure I must be compelled to do that. A fortnight ago, as I was going home, the same

policeman again interfered with me, and I was obliged to put up with his insults. Last week I wrote a letter to the captain of the hulks at Woolwich, telling him of the oppression I suffer. I received a letter from the chaplain, of course containing religious advice, but the answer I obtained from the captain of the hulks was, that the next time I am insulted I should write to him again, when he will acquaint the Secretary of State with it, and put it down, if possible. How can we hope to get employment from any tradesmen, if the policemen persist in telling who we are? I know that if I were an independent gentleman myself, I would not trust a man who had no reference of some kind."

MR. MAYHEW: "We will now break up this meeting. I will let you know when to meet again. When I can arrange the formation of a committee of gentlemen willing to connect themselves with the undertaking I have sketched out, we can hold another assemblage in public. (Cheers.) In the meantime, if I can assist any of you with the loan of a few shillings—but, mind you, come to me gently, and not thick and fast—I will do what I can to help you. (Hear, hear.) I am a person who work myself for all I get, and remember I call myself a 'shilling man,' and not one of your 'sovereign people' (Laughter); and when I say 'a loan,' I want you all to feel that by doing your best to repay me, you will enable me to extend the same assistance to a greater number of your class. (Hear, hear.) Colonel Jebb looks on you almost with the eye of a father, and it touches him to the quick to hear of any of you relapsing. I trust that we shall prove successful in our object; but let me in conclusion entreat you all to adhere faithfully to your good resolves; and I hope you will find far greater happiness in pursuing honest courses than dishonest ones." (Cheers.)

The meeting, which lasted from eight o'clock to half-past ten, and was most orderly throughout, then quietly dispersed.

THE END.

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Listener. 27.9.51

Mayhew's Characters. Edited with a Note on the English Character by Peter Quennell. William Kimber. 21s.

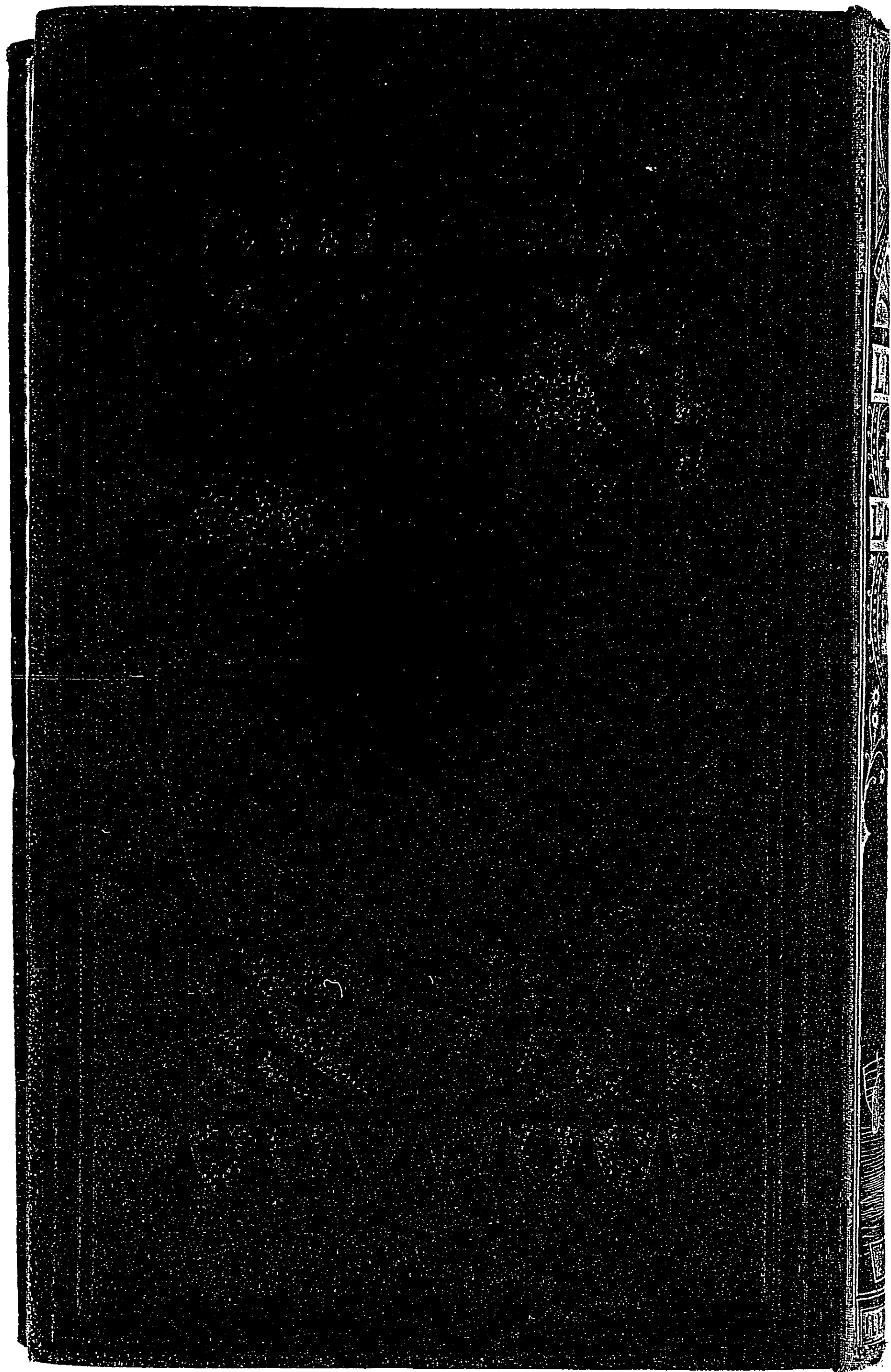
Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* was first published just a hundred years ago. *Mayhew's Characters* is the third selection published this year from that 'cyclo-pædia of the industry, the want, and the vice of the great Metropolis', and together with *Mayhew's London* and *London's Underworld* makes an excellent abridgment of Mayhew's pioneer sociological work. He described his important book as the first attempt to publish the history of a people, from the lips of the people themselves. It is this kind of verbatim reporting that gives *Mayhew's Characters* such variety and raciness: here may be heard not only the voice of the cockney, but the voices of many voluntary exiles—the Italian (with the inevitable red-jacketed monkey that one remembers from one's own childhood), the Arab street-seller of rhubarb and spice, the wandering Irish men and women. A reviewer of *London's Underworld* compared Mayhew's curiosity and eye for detail with Defoe's. But it is the recorded stories of the people interviewed by Mayhew and his collaborators that remind one even more of Defoe: they speak in the direct, racy narrative style that Defoe wrote; and one realises once more what a master of plain, colloquial language Defoe is.

Mayhew is the born sociologist. His curiosity drives him on, but he never condemns any of the tricksters and cheats he discovers; he merely describes them, and nearly always in their own recorded words. The candour of Mayhew's informants is remarkable; he must have had that kind of personality that invites confidences and is seldom distrusted. One tells him of 'men who go about half-naked, telling frightful tales about ship-wrecks, hair-breadth escapes from houses on fire, and such like aqueous and ingenuous (*sic*) calamities'; of initiation into the '*scaldrum dodge*' or 'the art of burning the body with a mixture of acids and gunpowder, so as to suit the hues and complexions of the accident to be deplored'. The shifts that beggars went to were many. There were also professional 'shiverers' who begged in inclement weather; one beggar got so used to shivering that he could not stop, even in hot weather. A pickpocket of thirteen tells Mayhew 'I have been in prison three times in Brixton, three times in the Old Horse [Bridewell], three times in the Compter, once in the Steel, and once in Maidstone. . . . Every time I came out harder than I went in'.

Although Mayhew does not set himself up as a moralist, he is not so detached that he does not feel pity for the London poor in their miseries—and a hundred years ago these were often extreme: attention may be drawn to the privations of a tin-ware seller who relates how one of his companions proposed going 'to do a feed on decayed shrimps or other offal laying about the

market' (for breakfast). Two and a half days' stone-breaking exhausts the tin-ware seller. 'Poverty had done its work, and I anticipated with pleasure my approaching dissolution'.

One is struck by a number of peculiar occupations: there is 'the pluckiest fire-eater going'; the wholesale rat-buyer who purchased yearly 26,000 live rats so that people could try their dogs on them; female tramps; the street-poet who had already written his own epitaph; the street conjuror. Wages earned by this shiftless section of the London poor were often very low indeed; even allowing for the great increase in the cost of living, the minimum quoted, 2s. to 3s. a week could not be cut much nearer to the bone of starvation. Only the clever and unscrupulous earned sometimes as much as a guinea a day. One of the worst features of Victorian London of the poor, was the condition of the lodging-houses or 'padding-kens', where men, women and child slept together, many in one room. Mayhew describes the lodging-houses as 'extremely filthy and disgusting; many of them are scarcely ever washed. . . . In most cases they swarm with vermin'. And to sleep in these places, the poor had to pay as much as 3d. a night out of their hard-earned pittance.



Victorian Low Life.—MAYHEW (H.)
THOSE THAT WILL NOT WORK, comprising Prostitutes, Thieves, Swindlers, Beggars, with Introductory Essay on the Agencies at present in Operation in the Metropolis for the Suppression of Vice and Crime, full illustrations, 8vo, 1862, scarce £2/2/0

The extra volume of Mayhew's "London Labour". The section on prostitution was written by Bracebridge Hemyng (famous author of Penny Dreadfuls), that on thieves and swindlers by John Benny, and on beggars by A. Halliday. It is a documented and detailed picture of vice and crime in mid-Victorian London, with the life-stories of those engaged.

Hawes

Hastings

1957

Mayhew (Henry)—The Supplementary Volume to London Labour and The London Poor; a cyclopaedia of the Conditions and Earnings of Those that Will Work, Those that Cannot Work, and Those that Will Not Work. Comprising: Prostitutes, Swindlers, Thieves, and Beggars. With introductory essay on the agencies at present in operation in the metropolis for the suppression of vice and crime. London, (1861), royal 8vo. Many plates, 544 pp. Cloth, gilt, stitching a little loose. Nice. £2 10/-.

Lee

Glasgow

Sept/57

275 PROSTITUTION. — Mayhew (Henry) London Labour and the London Poor, a cyclopaedia of the condition and earnings of . . . THOSE THAT WILL NOT WORK, comprising Prostitutes, Thieves, Swindlers, Beggars, with wood-engravings, 8vo, orig. cloth, VERY SCARCE, £6 1862

This is the very scarce EXTRA VOLUME, intended as a Supplement to the 4 vols. of London Labour and the London Poor.

Mayhew was the initiator of the line of philanthropic journalism which took the poor of London as its theme. In this volume his collaborators were William Tuckniss, Bracebridge Hemyng, John Binny and Andrew Halliday.

Halliday

Leicester

Feb/59

Holland, Ledbury. Oct. 167

MAYHEW (Henry) London Labour and the London Poor. The Extra Volume—Those that will not work. Comprising Prostitutes, Thieves, Swindlers, Beggars. By Several Contributors. With full-page plates and maps. 8vo, cloth. London. Griffin. 1861. SCARCE £3 10s.

Mayhew (Henry)—London Labour and the London Poor; A Cyclopaedia of the Condition and Earnings of those that will work, those that cannot work, and those that will not work. The Extra Volume only, comprising: Prostitutes, Thieves, Swindlers, Beggars. With illustrations. London, 1862, medium 8vo. Original cloth, gilt. Cover frayed, foxed, stitching slightly loose. 544 pp. £10.

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This is the very scarce EXTRA VOLUME, intended as a Supplement to the 4 vols. of London Labour and the London Poor.

Mayhew was the initiator of the line of philanthropic journalism which took the poor of London as its theme. In this volume his collaborators were William Tuckniss, Bracebridge Hemyng, John Binny and Andrew Halliday.

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